CHRIST AND THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN REPRESENTATIVE TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN THEOLOGIANS

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Chapter 1

THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS: NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGICAL MOTIFS AND INTERPRETATION

The Pauline teaching on the "principalities and powers" has reached a new kairos in our time. Germany amid the horrors of the Third Reich became the occasion for a refueled interest in the nature of "demonic" powers. America reached its own kairos during the civil rights strife of the 1960's which set inner cities ablaze and in the midst of our agonizing war in Vietnam which turned Southeast Asia into the "land of burning children," to use Daniel Berrigan's chilling phrase. "Yes, death is winning, life is losing," laments a character in a recent apocalyptic American novel.[1] Yes, echoes William Stringfellow, one of America's most cogent theological commentators on the "principalities and powers," we like Babylon live in the midst of the awesome moral power of death: "death comprehended sociologically and anthropologically, psychologically and psychically, economically and politically, societally and institutionally. Death as a moral power means death as social purpose,"[2] the social purpose of the "principalities and powers."

There are times when history exegetes scripture and scripture interprets history in such a way that a long forgotten or ignored aspect of Christian faith is suddenly thrust onto center stage. Recently this has happened as the Pauline "principalities and powers" and Christian social ethics have been joined together. Such is the kairos of which we speak. However, any kairos with its fever pitch and moral passion carries its own dangers of oversimplification or distortion. Someone shoved center stage may obscure the ordinary and every day players in the company who need always be around. This dissertation hopes to capture the intensity of new thought on the "principalities and powers,"[3] while at the same time positioning it reflectively within the context, that "center of gravity," we call Christian scripture and tradition.

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[1] Walker Percy, Love in the Ruins (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971). The novel is subtitled by the author, "The Adventures of a Bad Catholic at a Time Near the End of the World."

[2] William Stringfellow, An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1973), p. 70.

The central problem of this study is how to relate Jesus Christ, and the mission of his Church, and the structural powers of the world, i.e., governments, institutions, etc. This problem will be illumined by offering a conversation between the most important New Testament texts dealing with the "principalities and powers" (primarily Pauline) and representative twentieth century American theologians who have dealt with this issue.

To move from Paul's conception of the "powers" to the social and structural powers of our contemporary world is not a move which is direct or obvious to many people. Therefore attention must be paid first to the New Testament texts which deal with "powers." This opening chapter will be an historical-critical, hermeneutical, and theological study of the "powers" in the New Testament, particularly in the Pauline texts where most of the references are. The first concern is with what the "powers" meant to the author(s) of the texts and to their audiences. Then an appropriate contemporary interpretation will be sought: who are the "powers"; what is their function; how are they related to the risen and victorious Christ? We shall seek to substantiate the interpretation of the "powers" as social constructions and realities and shall make use of a functional hermeneutic: how did the "powers" function in Paul's time? And, what realities function analogously today? Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's "sociology of knowledge"[4] will provide a hermeneutical tool. Moving from exegesis to interpretation, these texts will be studied: I Corinthians 2:6-8, 15:24ff.; Ephesians 1:19-21, 3:10, 6:10-17; Colossians 1:15-20, 2:8-22; Galatians 4:8ff.; Romans 13:1-7 and Revelation 13.

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[3] From now on we shall use the shorthand "powers" as the general designation for the myriad forms of "powers" in New Testament thought.

The purpose of this chapter is not, of course, to attempt definitive exegetical solutions to all of the issues in these passages. Rather it is twofold: 1) to justify a sociological interpretation of the "powers"; and, 2) to present key theological motifs concerning the relation of Christ to the "powers." This purpose operates to expand the working canon with which we seek to clarify the biblical perspectives(s) on Christ's relationship to the structural "powers" of our world. Without benefit of these passages we are limited to a few enigmatic passages from the gospels (e.g., "Render unto Caesar . . ." Mark 12:14-17) and the often one-sided use of Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:13ff. Our purpose also functions to provide a more balanced canonical and theological perspective with which to analyze our representative American theological positions.

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[4] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1966).

The overall purpose of the dissertation is: 1) to elucidate the most representative ways that Christ is related to the structural powers in the American theological context; and 2) to evaluate these various positions by reference to the New Testament texts concerning the "powers," and the theological motifs therein. The five representative American theological positions to be studied are: 1) The Social Gospel--Walter Rauschenbusch; 2) Christian Realism--Reinhold Niebuhr; 3) Christian Conservatism--Eric Voegelin; 4) Resistance Theology; and 5) Liberation Theology--James Cone.

THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS: EXEGESIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter moves from exegesis of particular texts to a more comprehensive interpretation, while seeking to minimize the degree to which a theological structure is imposed upon the text. Our goal, however, is not to report piecemeal on the uniquenesses of each text but to derive a more unified and systematic picture. As mentioned above our purposes for this chapter are to justify a sociological interpretation of the "powers" and to present key theological motifs concerning the relation of Christ to the "powers." A preliminary explanation of these purposes is in order before proceeding to the texts.

The "Powers": A Preliminary Interpretive Tool

The categories of the sociology of knowledge provide a preliminary interpretive framework in which to understand the "principalities and powers" in Pauline theology. According to the analysis of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in The Social Construction of

Reality,[5] social realities are constructed, institutionalized, and "objectivated." Through this process culminating in "objectivation," these social constructions of reality have existence independent of, and external to, individuals; moreover, they can have certain power over human beings. These suprapersonal forces and realities can shape human life and understanding. In Berger and Luckmann's succinct phrases,

> Society is a human product.
> Society is an objective reality.
> Man is a social product.[6]

To interpret Paul in light of this model of understanding, a "principality and power" is such an institutionalized and objectivated social reality. Man is in varying degrees a product of that which he creates. A question throughout this chapter will be whether such an interpretation is appropriate in relation to what a first century person in his Hellenistic/Judaic/Roman world understood as the "principalities and powers."

The power of social constructions over human beings is explained by Peter Berger as the internalization of these objectivated social constructions. This internalization causes the structures of this world to determine the subjective structures of consciousness itself.[7] The Christian battle with the "powers" is not to let such internalization determine our lives and thought thereby de-humanizing us. As Paul warns, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind . . . ." (Romans 12:2).

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 58. See also pp. 40-118 for a detailed exposition.

[7] Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1967), p. 15.

Four Theological Motifs

In addition to interpretation of the "powers" we seek to understand how the New Testament authors understood the "powers" theologically, i.e., how they are related to Christ. There are four theological motifs which represent four clusters of theological questions. In order to get our cards on the table before we turn to the texts, these four motifs are briefly presented.

1. Eschatology and Ethics. The eschatological activity of God was a central component of Paul's theology and ethics as well as of Jesus. Since J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer, New Testament scholars have been confronted with the eschatological and apocalyptic context of Jesus and the New Testament. The major issue has been trying to decide whether to discard or re-interpret New Testament eschatology. Our options seem to be either to call its eschatology mistaken or anachronistic on the one hand or to seek to understand how the eschatological vision is not only relevant but also vital to a proper understanding of the Christian faith on the other. The former path reduces New Testament ethics to "interim ethics," while the second seeks to interpret eschatology as a foundation for ethics. This study travels along the second path.

Contemporary theology has seen a strong surge of those seeking to make eschatology the central, not last, chapter in Christian theology. Witness the work of Moltmann, Pannenberg and Braaten. In their thought the integral relationship of eschatology and ethics is carefully considered as well.[8] The question is: Is there an essential, foundational relationship between eschatology and ethics? While this question has been most vigorously studied concerning Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God, it can also be applied to the eschatological battle with the "powers" in Pauline theology. Günther Bornkamm and Victor Paul Furnish[9] are among those recent interpreters of Paul who demonstrate the centrality of eschatology in the understanding of Pauline theology and ethics. Today there is a growing acknowledgment of the significance of eschatology for social ethics.[10] This study will illuminate the integral relationship of eschatology and ethics.

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[8] Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); The Crucified God (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); The Church in

2. Christ's Lordship over the Powers. As we shall see below, the New Testament witnesses to Christ's victory over, and Lordship of, the "powers." Pertinent questions will be: what is the nature of Christ's victory? Is it objective and/or subjective? What is *our* role vis a vis Christ's Lordship? How do we reconcile Christ's victory with our continuing battle? Does the Lordship of Christ constitute a Christological foundation

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the Power of the Spirit (New York: Harper and Row, 1977); also Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), Chapter III; also Carl Braaten, *Eschatology and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974); see also Amos N. Wilder, *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950).

[9] Günther Bornkamm, *Paul* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), trans. D. M. G. Stalker, Chapter 5; also Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), especially pp. 112-135 and 208-226.

[10] H. Richard Niebuhr's *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959) and Ray Petry's *Christian Eschatology and Social Thought* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956) are two important historical statements making this case in addition to the new eschatological theologians.

for the "powers"? Cullmann[11] and Aulen[12] have reminded us of the dominant motif of Christ's victory over the "powers" in early Christian confessions and in patristic theology. We need to re-investigate the meaning of this motif today.

3. The "powers" as fallen. The "powers" are not serving God's redemptive plan. Sometimes they represent an evil force in God's creation. We shall ask about the nature and scope of their "fallenness."

4. The "powers" as demonic. We shall discriminate between "fallenness" and the "demonic." Are the "powers" by necessity demonic or only potentially demonic? What do we mean by "demonic"?

These four sets of theological questions are the principal ones which arise from the texts and from our minds as we try to understand the texts.

Then, in considering the nature and function of the "powers," we appropriate a functional hermeneutic and seek a theological understanding. Our functional hermeneutic making use of Berger and Luckmann's insights asks: how did the "powers" function in Paul's world? What realities function analogously today? A functional correspondence seeks to bridge the gap between differing cosmologies (world-pictures) while preserving a certain analogy of world views (perspectives--understanding of the whole of reality). For example, to confess "Christ is Lord of the Cosmos" evokes different world-pictures or cosmologies today than in the first century. Nevertheless we hope that there is still an analogous perspective which is shared when a first and a twentieth century person so confess. Our functional hermeneutic has the same purpose as, for example, the existential hermeneutic of Bultmann but extends the breadth of that hermeneutic from the more narrow confines of human self-understanding to include the human relatedness and human social life encompassing social constructions and realities.

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[11] Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950).

[12] Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951).

We now turn to examine the *nature* and *function* of the "powers" in Paul's day.

The "Powers": An Identification

Paul used many names for the myriad number of "powers": *principalities* - ἀπχάι - (I Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21, 3:10, 6:10; Col. 1:16, 2:10, 15; Titus 3:1); *powers* - δύναμεις - (I Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; I Peter 3:22; Ro. 8:38); *dominions* - κυριότητες - (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16); *names* - ὀνόματα - Eph. 1:21; Phil. 2:9); *world rulers* - κοσμοκράτορες - (Eph. 6:12); *spiritual hosts* - πνευματικα - (Eph. 6:12); *thrones* - θρόνοι - (Col. 1:16); *rulers* - ἀρχόντες - (I Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 1:21, 3:10); *authorities* - ἐξουσίαι - (Rom. 13; Eph. 1); *elements* - στοιχεῖα - (Col. 2; Gal. 4).

Paul never seeks to define carefully or differentiate between the various names. One reason may be that Paul assumed his readers knew precisely these distinctions. This may well be so. A more important theological reason may be that for Paul the only important thing about the "powers" was their subservience to Christ. He was not fascinated with them the way some apocalyptic or gnostic sources were; nor was he preoccupied in his letters with elaborate schemes concerning them.[13] The focus of Paul's discussion of them concerns Christ's Lordship over them. He is the center; they are relatively unimportant now. Christ has even robbed the "powers" of their fascination.

Several passages will be considered in Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians and Romans. But first let us survey the interpretation of the "powers" in the historical-critical period.

Modern Interpretation of the "Powers"

Dibelius' Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus, published in 1909, was an important history of religions analysis of the "powers" in Paul. It was, however, only an academic exercise since he believed the ideas of spirits and devils were relics of the past. His work is valuable in tracing Jewish and Gentile background but attempts no interpretation.[14] Other scholars in his period of critical scholarship gave the "powers" issue little consideration because of its spirit/demon character. Otto Everling remarked in 1888 about "the utterly subordinate significance of this segment of Paul's thought."[15] In 1951 James Stewart could still call this scriptural segment a neglected emphasis in New Testament theology.[16]

Heinrich Schlier, in Mächte und Gewalten im Neuen Testement (1930), did attempt seriously to ask questions of their relevance. The

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[13] Heinrich Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament (London: Burns and Oates, 1966), p. 13.

[14] H. Berkhof, Christ and the Powers (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1962), pp. 57-58.

[15] Cited in Berkhof, p. 57.

[16] James S. Stewart, "On a Neglected Emphasis in New Testament Theology," Scottish Journal of Theology, 4 (1951), 292-301.

"powers" present and interpret the world so that the world and everything in it (men, institutions, etc.) have the appearance "of their own making,"[17] thus promoting unbelief (Eph. 2:2). Berkhof correctly sees in Schlier's works, which identify the "powers" with death, anxiety and care, as helpful but as oriented around Heidegger and Bultmann more than around Paul.[18]

The "powers" question became a hot debate during the second World War in Germany. From Schlier's time on, the "powers" began to evoke more passionate theological concern. Understandably, it revolved around the political dimension of the "powers" as an awareness of a demonic presence in the world was awakened by Hitler and his Reich.

In "Principalities and Powers: the Cosmic Background in Paul's Thought,"[19] G. H. C. MacGregor identifies the "powers" against the Hellenistic background of the astral deities. The rapid spread of astralism was the result of a "failure of nerve": since the religion of personal deities had been abandoned, people fell into the belief in the fate of astral machinations.[20] MacGregor interprets them today in terms of psychological, physical, economic and military determinisms.[21] Alan Galloway, in his book The Cosmic Christ, interprets Paul's demonology in terms of the impersonal and the irrational.[22] G. B. Caird, in

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[17] H. Schlier, op. cit., p. 32.

[18] Berkhof, op. cit., pp. 57 and 62.

[19] G. H. C. MacGregor, in New Testament Sidelights, ed. H. K. McArthur (Hartford, Conn.: The Hartford Seminary Foundation Press, 1960).

[20] Ibid., pp. 90-92.

[21] Ibid., p. 101.

[22] Cited by MacGregor, p. 100.

Principalities and Powers (1956), worked primarily with the Old Testament background and identified the "powers" with the power of the earthy governing authorities, with religious "law", and with the irrational natural order. His is basically a descriptive work.[23] Rudolf Bultmann identified the "powers" against a Gnostic-Hellenistic background. While rejecting any material relevance of the "powers," he sought to demythologize them in terms of man's decision for authentic and inauthentic existence: Man does not have his life in his own hands but is constantly confronted with the decision of choosing his lord.[24]

Clinton Morrison,[25] Oscar Cullmann,[26] and Markus Barth[27] all find the major background to the "powers" in Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic which sees a coincidence between earthly rulers and spiritual powers. Each of these uses this position for fruitful interpretation. Cullmann and Morrison in particular have made significant contributions to the debate.

Cullmann places the "powers" within the framework of his Heilsgeschichte theology. He sees the background of the "powers" primarily in Old Testament and Hellenistic Judaism (i.e., Daniel, Enoch, the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach). Thereby, he believes that they stood for the coincidence of human and spirit powers, the latter standing behind the former.[28] Christ's victory over these "powers" was most important in early Christian confessions and world-views.[29] What do we make of them theologically? Cullmann's salvation-history context gives us a scheme for making sense of these "powers": a) the "powers" were created in Christ, through and for him (Col. 1:16); b) at the midpoint of history these "powers" were active in Christ's crucifixion (I Cor. 2:8); c) but, in the resurrection they were overthrown, yet not destroyed (Col. 2:15); d) for at the present time Christians must actively oppose them (Eph. 6:12ff.); e) however, they will be destroyed by Christ before the end (I Cor. 15:24ff.).

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[23] G. B. Caird, Principalities and Powers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

[24] R. Bultmann, Primitive Christianity (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 191f.; and Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), Vol. I, pp. 258-259.

[25] Clinton Morrison, The Powers That Be (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960).

[26] Christ and Time, op. cit.

[27] Markus Barth, Ephesians, The Anchor Bible, Vols. 34A, B (New York: Doubleday, 1974).

Cullmann describes the present time as an in-between period of tension (temporal dualism), between what has occurred and what is yet to be perfected. We live between D-Day and V-Day. Christ is Lord and now is the time of the kingdom of Christ: the "powers" are running out their leash and cannot defeat God's purpose. The kingdom of God, when the final victory is won, is our future hope.[30] The State, for example, is one of the "powers." Our attitude toward it therefore is to be watchful and critical, to place over against it a question mark. The "powers" are ordained yet still have demonic capacity. The State is and must be regarded as penultimate institution.[31] Cullmann's thesis, which depends on the paradoxical already/not yet motif in his understanding of temporal dualism, permits neither a divinization nor demonization of the State.[32]

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[28] Christ and Time, pp. 192-195.

[29] Ibid., p. 103f.

[30] Ibid., pp. 153, 198.

[31] Ibid., pp. 199-200.

[32] Ibid., pp. 198ff.

Karl Barth's position on the christological foundation of the State is close to Cullmann's. In his 1938 essay, "Rechtfertigung und Recht" (translated title, "Church and State"),[33] Barth states that the State is to be understood eschatologically as one of the "powers" subjected to the Lordship of Christ.[34] The State is one of those rebellious powers subjected yet not defeated; so, it may become demonic. Romans 13 and Revelation 13 form the poles of the dialectic within which the State moves.[35] Barth's interpretation provided a christological foundation for the State, but one understood eschatologically. Without allowing a divinization of the State or of "order," it did allow for a *correspondence* between the realms of God's justification and human justice and gave us a preview of a later essay (1946) in which he would demonstrate correspondences, allegories, and analogies between the Christian community and the State.[36]

Clinton Morrison basically accepts Cullmann's exegetical position (without accepting all his theological conclusions) and provides exegetical support in his superb monograph, *The Powers That Be*. He seeks to interpret the ἐξουσία of Romans 13:1ff. as the *coincidence* of human and spiritual power. Attempting to understand Romans as a direct communication, he thus seeks out both the understanding of "powers" held by Paul and the Roman congregation. He concludes that in the world view of Paul's day "a significant relationship between civil rulers and spiritual powers was commonly accepted in Graeco-Roman thought as well as Jewish apocalyptic."[37] He demonstrates well that in Judaic thought human rulers were thought to have spiritual princes behind them. Paul's use of Psalm 110 in I Cor. 15:24f. and Eph. 1:20ff. and use of Isa. 45:24 in Phil. 2:10f. shows his acceptance of this belief.

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[33] In *Community, State and Church*, ed. Will Herberg (Glouchester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968).

[34] Ibid., pp. 101-118. [35] Ibid., pp. 116ff.

[36] "The Christian Community and the Civil Community" in Herberg, op. cit., pp. 149-189.

Morrison traces the idea of "powers" in Graeco-Roman thought. The early philosophical world view mixed with the personality of pagan religions to produce various gods associated with the δύναμεις of the divine. The systemization of this process led to the thought of the subjection of the Cosmos to the guardianship of "powers." In order to be effective one had to know and cooperate with these world rulers. In higher religion the "powers" served to explain the relationship between deity and history/destiny. In lower religions the "powers" were the basis for popular belief in demons, magic, etc. Formulas, symbols, etc., were used to influence these world rulers and elemental spirits.

Astrology came to fill the gap of a static and dying Greek religion. It influenced Stoicism which was trying to avoid an understanding of the universe as chance. But its rigid sense of Providence and cosmic order looked too often like "Fate," and "Fate" became the "meaning" of a mechanical universe. The monotheism of emperor worship arrived as the world-wide rule of Rome took on "Cosmic" dimensions. The concept of daimones as God's deputies converted into word concepts like the principalities and powers. It was from domination by all these kinds of "powers" that gnostic, mystery, and magic movements sought to liberate their followers.[38]

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[37] Powers That Be, p. 130. [38] The above summary: ibid., pp. 75-88.

In Hellenistic Judaism we see evidences of the place of "powers." The LXX translation of Yahweh Sabaoth is Lord of *Powers*. (Of course the monotheistic tendency placed all powers "under God.") In Philo, the State was one of the "powers" through which God ruled.[39]

Morrison concludes that it was a common Greco-Roman view that the ruler had a relationship to a system of cosmic powers. Ἐξουσίαι therefore were understood within a world view of "enveloping aeons and daimones, providence and powers, in which the ruler was both divine by appointment and human by birth, *and the boundaries between the spirit world and the world of humanity and nature were fluid and often imperceptible*."[40] Morrison illustrates with I Cor. 2:6-8, 6:1ff. and Rom. 13:1ff. that both Paul and his audience believed in this close connection of human powers and spiritual powers.

Probably the most compelling study of the "powers" which moves from exegesis to contemporary theological interpretation is H. Berkhof's work, *Christ and the Powers*.[41] Berkhof agrees with the scholars above that Paul borrowed the concept of the "powers" from Jewish Old Testament, apocalyptic and rabbinic literature. Daniel, for example, refers to the angels behind the thrones of the world (10:13, 20). The Jewish background believed that: 1) the powers were personal spiritual beings; and 2) they influenced events on earth.[42]

Paul's conception of the "powers" are traced in his epistles. In Rom. 8:38f. the "powers" have a role of domination and condition human life. Paul downplays their personal nature. In I Cor. 2:8 the

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[39] Ibid., pp. 94-96.

[40] Ibid., p. 99 (emphasis mine).

[41] Berkhof, op. cit.

[42] Berkhof, pp. 8-11.

"powers" are not just men but spiritual powers. Behind Rome and Jewish religion Paul sees invisible powers working. In Col. 2:8, 14ff., 20ff., the powers, στοιχεια, rule over human life outside of Christ in human traditions, public opinion, legalism, and asceticism. They are definite religious and ethical rules. Christ has at the cross unmasked and disarmed the quasi-divine authority of these structures. In Gal. 4:1-11 the domination of the στοιχεια is in Jewish/Christian circles the law and in Gentile circles astrological religion. In both cases, "one seeks stability and structure for one's life in a scaffolding of laws, to which divine sanction is attributed . . . ."[43]

Paul, says Berkhof, observes that life is ruled by "powers." "He speaks of time (present and future), of space (depth and height), of life and death, of politics and philosophy, of public opinion and Jewish law, of pious tradition and the fateful course of the stars."[44] However, unlike Jewish apocalypticism, Paul was interested mainly in the influence of "powers" in human life and affairs. Paul thus demythologizes their concepts from their purely angelic existence into a kind of earthly existence.[45]

The "powers" (Col. 1:15-17) are part of God's good creation. Not evil in themselves, they hold life together, preserving it from chaos. Berkhof relates them to what in Lutheran theology are called Orders of Creation and Preservation.

However, we know the "powers" not in their intended role but as fallen. They no longer serve God but become gods (Gal. 4:8). This is the "demonic reversal": the "powers" separate man from God. They still preserve the world from chaos but "by holding the world together they hold it away from God . . . ."[46] Berkhof describes the eerie example of Nazism:

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[43] Ibid., pp. 14-16.

[44] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[45] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

> When Hitler took the helm in Germany in 1933, the powers of Volk, race and state took a new grip on men. Thousands were grateful, after the confusion of the preceding years, to find their lives again protected from chaos, order and security restored. No one could withhold himself, without utmost effort, from the grasp these powers had on men's inner and outer life.[47]

The state, politics, class, public opinion, accepted morality, etc., give unity and direction to life. Yet as they do they separate people's lives from the true God. They lead us to believe we have meaning in that which is apart from God.[48]

Berkhof next discusses the "powers" in light of redemption. When Christ was crucified and raised and wherever the event is proclaimed, the dominion of the "powers" over the world is at an end. "This is certainly the center of everything Paul says about the Powers."[49]

The atonement not only liberates the person from guilt but also from fate. Jewish law and pagan regulations are overcome by the forgiveness and acquittal at the cross (Col. 2:13-15). Christ "made a public example of them" - the true nature of the "powers" is revealed: they are God's adversaries, false gods. Christ "has triumphed over them" - the unmasking is already their defeat. God demonstrates he is stronger. The concrete evidence of this triumph is that at the cross Christ has "disarmed the powers." Their weapon is "struck out of their hands" - the weapon of illusion, their beguiling pretension of ultimacy.

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[46] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[47] Ibid., p. 25.

[48] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[49] Ibid., pp. 28-30.

Wherever the cross is preached the unmasking and disarming of the "powers" occurs.[50]

That Christ has unmasked and disarmed the "powers" does not mean they have been put to a stop. The victory is future and certain and yet the battle continues until it is finished (I Cor. 15:24ff.). We live _between the "already" and the "not yet."_ Berkhof interprets this present life as between the times: "The Powers are still present; but wherever Christ is preached and believed in, a limit has been set to their working. This limit is the sign and the promise of their defeat."[51]

Berkhof believes that our task is to "Christianize" the "powers"! The crisis which Christ brings to the "powers" goes far outside the border of the Church. For example, in Christian missions the entrance of Christ desacralizes the "powers" in control.[52] To Christianize the "powers" means to transform them from being ideological centers into what God means them to be: helps, instruments, giving shape and direction to life. We must always be seeking to identify the demonic "powers" and transform them.[53]

Berkhof variously identifies the "powers": human traditions, morality, religious-ethical rules, the administering of justice and ordering of the state, politics, class, social struggle, national interest, public opinion, ideas of decency and of democracy, the place of clan and tribe, respect for ancestors, the family, and the powers of race and _Volk_.[54]

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[50] Ibid., p. 31.

[51] Ibid., p. 35.

[52] Ibid., p. 45.

[53] Ibid., pp. 49-53.

[54] Ibid., pp. 22, 25, 27.

Our battle with the "powers" (Eph. 6:10-18) is fought with the weapons of faith. Berkhof points out that the armaments in the battle imagery are defensive. Christ takes care of the offensive. We are to stand by our faith and live the Christian life. Thereby we hold the seductive power of the "powers" at a distance until Christ wins the victory.[55] Our task is not to overthrow the "powers" but to Christianize them.

The last scholar to be considered in this overview is Amos Wilder, whose earlier work had also attempted to relate eschatology and ethics.[56] In a more recent essay, "Kerygma, Eschatology and Social Ethics,"[57] Wilder focuses on Paul's eschatological battle with the "principalities and powers" as a foundation for social ethics. "We have here in Paul a mythological understanding of the victory of the Gospel over the tyrants of this world, its false authorities."[58] The "powers" are what we speak of in non-mythological terms as "the structural elements of unregenerate society."[59] The dethroning of such authorities "constitutes the central task of Christian social action."[60] The false gods or powers "hold sway over the imaginations of men" and "embody themselves in destructive institutions and mores."[61]

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[55] Ibid., p. 43. John Howard Yoder, the translator of Berkhof's book, uses Berkhof's work extensively in his own provocative book, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972), especially Chapter 8.

[56] Op. cit.

[57] In W. D. Davies, ed., The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology (Cambridge: The University Press, 1956), pp. 509-536.

[58] Ibid., p. 527.

[59] Ibid., p. 528.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., p. 529.

Recognizing the different kinds of "powers" to which Paul referred, Wilder sees the nature of our battle differing from foe to foe. With the "powers" of blasphemy, idolatry, sexual depravity, etc., Paul urged separation from them. With the "powers" of social patterns, marriage, government, etc., Paul urged acquiescence and detachment (the "as though" of I Cor. 7:29-31). When Paul had in mind the "structural elements of unregenerate society," those which enslave persons, he urged aggressive combat.[62]

Our overview leads to several preliminary conclusions. First, the multi-faceted background(s) for understanding the "powers" is not surprising in view of the syncretistic nature of the Hellenistic/Roman world of Paul's day. Paul's use of so many different names for the "powers" is illustrative. Secondly, we see a considerable effort by some scholars in attempting to interpret the "powers" sociologically. Thirdly, we find Morrison's thesis compelling that in the first century world view there was a thin veil, a fluid line separating and connecting earthly powers and spiritual powers. The case rests not on the exegesis of Romans 13:1-7, where the battle is frequently waged,[63] but rather on a circumspect exegetical picture of all of the "powers" passages. It is toward this end that we now proceed.

THE "POWERS" IN THE CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

The eschatological confusion at Corinth provides an important starting point. The problems at Corinth were many: factions, immorality, lack of order, religious restrictions, the spiritual gifts, celibate marriages, etc. Käsemann argues persuasively that at the root of all the Corinthian problems was enthusiasm,[64] the first life and death crisis of the early church.[65] The "realized eschatology" of enthusiasm believed that the kingdom had already come, the "powers" already destroyed. The resurrection from the dead had already occurred (II Tim. 2:18); Christ's Lordship was complete and visible.

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[62] Ibid., p. 535.

[63] See Morrison, pp. 40-54; Cullmann, Christ and Time, pp. 191-210 and The State in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), pp. 50-70, 95-114.

According to their gnostic form of thought, Jesus had borne the cross so that they might be exalted. In Käsemann's words, "Christ was made man so we might become divine."[66] They thought they lived after the cross. There was no future Parousia because it had already happened. In their eschatology the "not yet" dimension was dissolved into the "already."

The thrust of Käsemann's thesis concerning the Corinthian enthusiasm is shared by other scholars with slight modifications in terminology and thought. Schmithals[67] identifies the problem as an early form of Gnosticism by which the adherents thought themselves "christs."[68] Now as divine, they fell victim to two apparently contradictory errors: ascetism and libertinism.

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[64] Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 126.

[65] Käsemann, Perspectives on Paul (London: SCM Press, 1971), p. 123.

[66] Perspectives, p. 59.

[67] Walter Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971).

[68] Ibid., p. 30.

> The Gnostic in strict asceticism avoids any contamination of his pneumatic substance by the sarkical sphere, or, in the consciousness of the invulnerability of the pneumatic quality, he demonstrates his freedom in unrestrained libertinism.[69]

Conzelmann will not call this group Gnostic, but rather "proto-Gnostic." He however describes the group similarly as a group of enthusiasts with exaltation Christology and catchwords of freedom and knowledge.[70] All three men share the perception of a realized eschatological perfectionism based on pneumatic spirituality and/or Gnostic speculation as the basic Corinthian problem.

Throughout the New Testament there is the two-fold nature to eschatology: the "already" and "not yet." It is dangerous to let the tension collapse either by making it totally realized (enthusiasm) or totally transcendent (Jewish apocalyptic). Käsemann puts it another way: ". . . the Synoptic writers, Paul and even Hebrews endeavored to find a balance between the cross and the exaltation."[71]

Paul countered this realized eschatology of glory by asserting the "eschatological centrality of Jesus' cross."[72] Käsemann, talking of Paul's rebuttal to the Corinthian enthusiasts, says that for Paul Jesus' glory was in the cross and the church's glory is in its decision,

> . . . to praise the one who was crucified as the power and wisdom of God, to seek salvation in him alone and to turn their existence into the service of God under the token of Golgotha.[73]

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[69] Ibid., p. 219; see also p. 120.

[70] Hans Conzelmann, I Corinthians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 14-16.

[71] Ernst Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1968), p. 13. John, he feels, let the tension collapse in the realized presence of the kingdom.

[72] A phrase of J. Louis Martyn in an unpublished manuscript.

[73] Perspectives, p. 59.

Paul answered this enthusiasm with a Christian apocalyptic perspective: No, the kingdom has not yet come. We are in an eschatological struggle at the juncture of the ages. To be involved in this struggle is our vocation. Paul's vision was of an age in travail struggling to be born into a new age (Romans 8:22). Paul knew that we still struggle with the principalities and powers even though Christ is victorious over them. Bultmann presents this Pauline eschatology:

> It was also an idea of Paul's that the work of Christ was a victory over the cosmic powers (I Cor. 2:6-8; 15:24-26), and even before Paul the idea had already been expressed in the Christ hymn quoted by him at Phil. 2:10f. But the characteristic idea of Paul is the conception that although the cosmic drama--begun with the resurrection of Christ--is being played in the present, it is by no means already finished. Christ's battle against the powers fills the time between his resurrection and his parousia; not until the latter will the last enemy, death, be destroyed (I Cor. 15:20-27).[74]

The Christian life lived between the old and new ages is apocalyptic. Käsemann interprets Paul's perspective: A person's life is a confrontation between God and the principalities of this world; as such a man's life can only be understood apocalyptically.[75] Paul's apocalyptic maintains the dialectical tension between the salvation which is present and the ultimate salvation which lies ahead. Käsemann adds,

> Here we have the answer to the crucial question why Paul did not take over the present eschatology of the enthusiasts but set over against it the eschatological reserve and apocalyptic. He is unable to assent to the statement that the Christian has only to demonstrate his heavenly freedom because the powers and principalities have already become subject to the Christ.[76]

Paul did not say, however, that nothing has really happened. Creation is groaning in travail. The power of God is now at work.

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[74] R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. II, p. 153.

[75] New Testament Questions, p. 132.

[76] Ibid., p. 136.

Even though the final victory is coming to us from the future (Romans 13:11), we can participate now in the freedom of God's kingdom among us. II Cor. 5:16-20 is a testament to Paul's vision of the victory in which we now participate. It is a presentation of Paul's own brand of enthusiasm, an enthusiasm qualified by the cross and by the 'reserve of apocalyptic.'[77]

The enthusiasm issue is important because it highlights the future accent of the "powers" question. To those who casually assert the final defeat of the "powers" in the present, Paul answers in I Cor. 15:24-26,

> Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule (ἀρχήν) and every authority (ἐξουσίαν) and power (δύναμιν). For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (RSV).

The Old Testament allusion is to Psalm 110 in which God's enemies are made his footstool. Kings are among the enemies. The progressive subjection of the "powers" is suggested[78] in this enthronement psalm. Paul suggests such a progressive subjection until the last enemy is "swallowed up in victory." Paul appropriates an apocalyptic scheme in this passage. What is significant is that the enthronement of Christ is held in an eschatological already/not yet tension. Christ is exalted (Phil. 2:6ff.; Eph. 4:8ff.), but the final victory lies in the future.[79]

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[77] We will not go so far as to say Paul was a Gnostic as Reitzenstein did (Conzelmann, op. cit., p. 14) or to say that II Cor. 5:16 was a Gnostic gloss, as Schmitals maintains (op. cit., pp. 302ff.). Paul's enthusiasm was checked by the not yet pole of his already/not yet eschatology.

[78] M. Barth, op. cit., p. 153.

[79] See Conzelmann, op. cit., pp. 269ff.

The key message of this passage is its note of apocalyptic reserve: Do not pretend the final victory is accomplished, the "powers" totally defeated. Christ will reign until he defeats them all, the last of which will be death. Ours is a time of eschatological battle with the "powers" waged at the foot of the cross and not in the afterglow of the resurrection. You enjoy now first fruits of victory (e.g., the Spirit), a foretaste of the glory. Yet the final victory is but coming.

I Corinthians 2:6-8

> Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age (ἀρχόντων), who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (RSV).

Two points are pertinent: first, the coincidence of earthly and spiritual powers is clear. Certainly Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, Pilate and Herod are referred to. But the phrase "rulers of this age" also refers to spiritual powers. We agree with Cullmann, Morrison and Berkhof that the reference is to both earthly and spiritual powers.[80] Secondly, the wisdom of God is the preaching of Christ crucified--it is a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles (I Cor. 1:21-31). Even here Paul places before the enthusiasts the cross, the apocalyptic reserve of Christ crucified. To combine "cross" and "Lord" and "wisdom" certainly would cause "cognitive dissonance" (to use a modern phrase) to the enthusiasts.

In the Corinthian passages studied we discover: 1) the close relationship between earthly and spiritual powers; and 2) the promise of Christ's subjection of the powers which will be completed in the future. Meanwhile ours is the age of battle with the powers and not a magical control over them; hence, the apocalyptic reserve and ethical demands of the cross of Christ place us in the world with a calling worked out in the "already-not yet" condition of the present eschatological age.

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[80] Ibid., p. 61.

THE EPHESIANS CORRESPONDENCE[81]

This Pauline correspondence offers another facet to our theological reconstruction of the "powers." Markus Barth's excellent translation of the passages in question will be used.[82]

Ephesians 1:19b-21

> For that mighty strength is at work which God has exerted in the Messiah when He has raised him from the dead. He has enthroned him at his right hand in the heavens above every government (αρχης) and authority (ἐξουσίας), power (δυνάμεως) and dominion (κυριότητες) and any title (ὀνόματος) bestowed, not only in this age but also in the age to come. He put everything under his feet and appointed him, the head over all, to be head of the church.

The verse comprises part of a Christological hymn to the resurrected Lord, "a resurrection psalm."[83] It is not only reminiscent of Old Testament enthronement psalms but also contains two quotes: Psalm 110:1 in Ephesians 1:20 and Psalm 8:7 in Ephesians 1:22.[84]

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[81] While I accept Markus Barth's critical position that Ephesians was a late work of Paul written from prison to the new Gentile converts in the Ephesian church, the reader need not agree in order to follow our purpose of reconstructing a "Pauline" theology of the "powers." See M. Barth, op. cit., Vol. A, pp. 3-4.

[82] Full translation, pp. xxvii-xxxiv, Vol. A.

[83] Ibid., Vol. A, p. 153. [84] Ibid., p. 153.

The lists of "powers," then, go back to Psalms and are not a "strange" element. They may have their origin in the cult or in Wisdom schools but are, according to Markus Barth, "certainly also a result of the apocalypticists' special interest in the angelic and demonic worlds."[85] Markus Barth translates ἀρχης "governments" to represent what he believes was "the direct association of these heavenly principalities and powers with the structures and institutions of life on earth . . ."[86] (thereby aligning himself with Morrison and Cullmann).

While in other passages (Eph. 4:8, Col. 2:15) the image is of the triumphal procession of a king made up of the subjected kings, the image in Ephesians 1:20-22 is of a royal court where servants and defeated foes pay homage.[87] The Old Testament "Lord of hosts" is now correlated with the Messiah as Lord of the "powers."

Ephesians 3:10

> The manifold wisdom of God is now to be made known through the church to the governments (ἀρχαις) and authorities (ἐξουσίας) in the heavens. (Barth's translation)

The phrase "through the church" is found nowhere else in the New Testament. The church is now assuming Jesus' prophetic ministry. In the context of our total study, we see her mission is to make known the nature of the "powers" and of The Power, Christ. Markus Barth writes about the mission of the church in the "Cosmic ecclesiology" of Ephesians:

> Following this verse the church would unduly limit her task if she cared only for the souls of men or for an increase in membership. Rather, she has to be a sign and proof of a change that affects the institutions and structures, patterns and spans of the bodily

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[85] Ibid., p. 154.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., pp. 170-176, 180-183.

> and spiritual, social and individual existence of all men. The power of filling, subjugating, and dominating "all things," including these powers, is reserved to God and Christ alone. But the function of demonstrating God's dominion and love is entrusted to the church . . . . To let God's light shine--this is the servant task ascribed to the church in Ephesians 3:10.[88]

Markus Barth's general comments on the "powers" are worthy of brief presentation here.[89] He agrees with those scholars who see the most likely background for the "powers" in the Old Testament, Jewish apocalyptic, rabbinic, Qumran complex of tradition. So, Yahweh war, divine kingship, Daniel's spiritual princes, etc., serve as a backdrop.

What does Paul reveal of their character and function? Markus Barth summarizes very well: 1) Some are identified with political, financial, legal, ecclesiastic, tribal potentates (Rom. 13:1-7, I Cor. 2:8). 2) Some are linked closely to death and life--present, future, height and depth, etc., and appear to denote natural, biological and historical determinants of human life (Rom. 8:38-39, I Cor. 15:24-27). 3) Titles or names include such forms of address and proper names and titles: _papa_, Caesar, emperor, savior, symbolic names, Uncle Sam, Deutscher Michel (Eph. 1:21). 4) Elements of the world concern traditions, doctrines, and practices that concern legal constraints in religion and private life.[90]

"To summarize," adds Barth, "it is probable that Paul means by principalities and powers those institutions and structures by which earthly matters and invisible realms are administered and without which no human life is possible."[91] So Barth echoes and adds to our list of interpretations of the "powers": the power of nature, historic processes, hope or threat of the future, burdens of the past, rulers, law, tradition, ideologies, prejudices, sex, education, politics, economics and aesthetics.

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[88] Ibid., p. 365.

[89] Ibid., pp. 170-176, 180-183.

[90] Ibid., p. 174.

[91] Ibid.

Paul's concern is to see Christ's lordship over all that affects human life. Barth extends the issues beyond existential concerns, saying:

> To be human means more than to have self-understanding, to encounter one's fellow man, or to be bound to a community. Man is also in the grip of the powers of nature and history.[92]

Barth next addresses one of our central questions: are the "powers" good or evil, or both? Some are evil such as death and the spiritual hosts of evil. But if all are evil then all power except God's is evil and all institutions and structures of life are evil. Is this not to flirt with the gnostic heresy, the division of God into gods of good and evil? Barth shows that not all the powers are evil, e.g., life and angels. While some are evil (Rev. 13), others serve the Lord--Cyrus (Isa. 45), Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18), and the State by design (Rom. 13). Those structures that shape created life by certain constraints and laws are not essentially evil.[93]

Many powers become evil only because they are idolized and worshipped by man. Paul, according to Markus Barth, makes three things clear: 1) the responsibility of man; 2) the inextricability of man's life from angelic and demonic forces; 3) the victory of the Messiah over all these powers.[94]

Barth summarizes the various ways in which the victory of God is described: Eph. 1:10--Christ from eternity is called to be head over all things; Col. 1:15-16--the presumption of his victory lies in his role in creation. According to Col. 1:20-22; 2:14-15, Eph. 2:14-16, the triumph is gained at the cross. Eph. 1:20-23--Christ's resurrection and enthronement and present rule over the church and the world are the means of the subjugating of the powers. According to Phil. 2:10-11 and I Cor. 15:25-26, the subjection is still in progress toward consummation. Rom. 8:37 speaks of the victory already given the saints.[95] We can thus readily see the important place that the various images of Christ's victory over the "powers" had in New Testament confessions of faith.

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[92] Ibid., p. 176.

[93] Ibid., p. 181.

[94] Ibid.

What about the present? Are we free from all struggle with the "powers" (enthusiasm)? Paul answers that the Lordship of Christ truly inaugurates the battle. Eph. 6:10-17 describes the battle with remarkable imagery.

Ephesians 6:10-17

> For the remaining time become strong in the Lord, that is, by the strength of his power. Put on God's (splendid) armor in order to be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For we are wrestling not with blood and flesh, but with the governments (ἀρχάς) with the authorities (ἐξουσίας), with the overlords of this dark world (κοσμοκράτορες), with the spiritual hosts of evil in the heavens (πνευματικά) . . . . Stand firm now, "girded with truth around your waist,/clad with righteousness for a cuirass," steadfast because the gospel of peace is strapped under your feet. With all (this equipment) take up faith as the shield with which you will be able to quench the fire-missiles of the evil one. Take salvation as your helmet and the sword provided by the Spirit, that is, the word of God. (Barth's translation)

The context for these verses is the eschatological battle with the "powers." Paul appears to mix metaphors, using war and athletic imagery.[96] Those who debate either one or the other miss the richness of the imagery and the sense of living between times. The wrestling is a combination of sport wrestling and hand to hand combat. The sports image combats a tragic dualism; but, the battle imagery warns us to take seriously what goes on in the world. Our position is not one of Stoic resignation, apocalyptic complacence, or terrified defeatism. Christ has inaugurated the victory and will finish it. We battle with the sweet wind of victory in our sails pushing us forward.

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[95] Ibid., p. 182.

[96] Ibid., pp. 763f. We follow M. Barth in this stimulating translation and interpretation.

Moreover, we battle, not with the weapons of the world, but with the weapons put in our hands by Christ: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. Berkhof's point is well taken that the weapons mentioned are defensive weapons. However the connotation is not that the "powers" hold an upper hand but that the Christ is the one who will win the victory. Our place is to keep the faith, resist the seductions of evil, and preach the gospel of Christ. As we shall see, that gospel mounts an offensive against the "powers."

Ephesians adds to our developing picture of the "powers." First, Christ is the true Lord of the "powers." Secondly, the Church is called to assert Christ's Lordship over all the "powers" and to do battle with the evil "powers." Thirdly, the Jewish apocalyptic context suggests that the "powers" are a combination of earthly and spiritual powers. Therefore, Markus Barth's translation of "governments and powers" is a correct interpretation in our estimation, though one must not misconstrue the translation to mean only earthly and not spiritual powers, but rather the combination of the two.

THE COLOSSIAN CORRESPONDENCE: CHRIST AND COLOSSIAN SYNCRETISM

Colossians 1:15-20

> [15]He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; [16]for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones (ϑρόνοι) or dominions (κυριότητες) or principalities (ἀρχαί) or authorities (ἐξουσίαι)--all things were created through him and for him. [17]He is before all things, and in him all things hold together . . . . [19]For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20]and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (RSV)

Colossians 2:8-15, 20-22

> [8]See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits (στοιχεια) of the universe, and not according to Christ. [9]For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, [10]and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority (ἀρχης και ἐξουσίας) . . . . [12]and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. [13]And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, [14]having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. [15]He disarmed the principalities (ἀρχάς) and powers (ἐξουσίας) and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him . . . .
>
> [20]If with Christ you died to elemental spirits of the universe why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, [21]"Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" [22](referring to things which all perish as they are used), according to human precepts and doctrines? (RSV)

The basic issue of the Colossians passage is the nature of Christ's Lordship over all creation. The relationship of Christians to the "elemental spirits of the universe" is a central concern. Corinthian enthusiasm is not the problem at Colossae.[97] In fact, it is so small a problem that Colossians 2:12 will state what Paul was most careful to deny in I Corinthians 15: that we are (present tense) resurrected with Christ.[98] The problem at Colossae was the syncretistic religions which Christians wanted to hold on to in addition to Christ. Their faith wanted: Christ plus the elemental spirits of the universe.

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[97] Edward Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 105.

What were the "powers," termed the elemental spirits of the universe (στοιχεια του κόσμου)? Edward Lohse, A. J. Banstra,[99] and Joe Billy McMinn[100] all give thorough analyses of the development of the meaning of the terms. Lohse's summary is representative. Lohse says that the meaning of the principalities and powers or the elemental spirits of the universe can be traced through ancient literature. These "spirits" began as the fundamental principles out of which the world arose. To the philosophers they were the basic elements, air, fire, water, and earth. In Hellenistic syncretism these elements were thought to be in control of the elements of the universe. Later in syncretism, these cosmic powers were worshipped as divine; some thought they gave laws and prescriptions to man.[101]

Various interpretations have generally focused on three principal meanings, none of which need to be excluded: 1) Elements as principles--

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[98] Of course, one can also conjecture that the writer of Colossians is an enthusiast because of these verses. I choose to regard the problems of Colossae and Corinth as quite different; Paul was challenging the Corinthians for believing that the kingdom had already fully come. The Colossians are challenged because Christ's coming had made no real difference in their relationship to the elemental spirits. In this sense the problems of Colossae and Galatia are similar.

[99] The Law and the Elements of the World (J. H. Kok: N. V. Kampen, 1964).

[100] An Historical Treatment of the Greek Phrase ΤΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΞΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ, Th.D. dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1970.

[101] Lohse, pp. 96-98.

religious teachings, laws, etc. 2) Elements as cosmological forces--elemental parts of world (cosmos), astral forces, fate, etc. 3) Elements as personalized forces behind astral or earthly elements--astral and cosmic deities.[102]

Early Christian literature reflects the various interpretations: religious laws and institutions, philosophy, and physical and astral bodies and elements, i.e., sun, moon.[103] Reformation interpretation unsurprisingly centered around the elements as religious (Jewish) legalism. Recent interpretation has wavered among all three main ways mentioned above.[104]

Bandstra makes a convincing case for "Law" and "Flesh" as the meaning of the elements for Paul. "Law" and "Flesh" operative in the world before and outside Christ are ineffectual for salvation and so are illusory, "weak and beggarly." Certainly Bandstra has struck on one significant meaning, but there is no need in isolating this meaning. Law, flesh, fate, astral religion, philosophy, ascetic mysteries, and gnosis are all part of Paul's world and the syncretistic world of Colossae. The various meanings of the powers and elements are suggested by the general nature of Paul's lists. Paul sought not to limit the myriad of meanings and enslavements. We will profit by including most of the meanings possible in the Hellenistic menagerie of little gods.

The Colossian Christians, deeply influenced by their life situation within Hellenistic syncretism, wished to worship both Christ and the elemental spirits. A man's life was thought to be lived and determined by a particular sphere of influence.[105] The author of the Colossian letter proclaims that Christ alone is to be worshipped. It is Christ who is behind, above, and "Lord" of the elemental spirits of the universe. Whoever belongs to this Lord is free from the enslaving cosmic powers and from the compelling forces of fate.[106] Tatian explained:

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[102] So agree Bandstra and McMinn, op. cit.

[103] Bandstra, op. cit., pp. 5-12.

[104] Ibid., pp. 13-28.

> But we are superior to fate, and instead of the erring demons we have come to know one unerring master, and since we are not led by fate we reject the decrees of it.[107]

Early Christian apologists urgently fought against fate as a denial of the providence and goodness of God. Certainly a fateful astral or stoic philosophy figured in the syncretistic context.[108]

Käsemann has interpreted Colossians as a primitive baptismal liturgy. Its purpose was to proclaim the true jurisdiction over man: not that of the cosmic powers, but that of Christ. Käsemann states, "In baptism the Christian changes from one jurisdiction to another. Henceforth he belongs not to the cosmos, but to the Cosmocrator."[109] A person in Christ is under Christ's sway. The letter assures its readers that the Kyrios is the lord of the cosmos and therefore mightier than the cosmic powers.[110]

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[105] Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 162.

[106] Lohse, p. 60.

[107] Or. Gaec. 9.2, cited in Lohse, p. 60.

[108] See The Early Church and the World, by C. J. Cadoux (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1925) for good survey treatment of powers and elements in the patristic era, esp. pp. 209-210, 244, 246, 247-248f., 269, 295, 344. Schlier, op. cit., p. 8, lists various Apostolic Fathers' use of the principalities and powers.

[109] Essays, p. 162.

[110] Ibid., p. 167.

The Colossian hymn 1:15-20 asserts this Lordship of Christ. This Lordship of Christ over all creation is stressed, a Lordship achieved through the particularity of the cross-resurrection event. In verse 20, "through the blood of his cross" is added. Lohse sees evidence of Pauline influence at a strategic point: "A theology of glory, which might view the consummation as already achieved, is corrected by the theology of the cross."[111] This hymn was probably a familiar one to Christians in Asia Minor, and the author of Colossians takes it as a starting point for his theological augmentation. The purpose was to demonstrate the absolute Lordship of Christ. Whoever belongs to him is free from the enslaving dominion of cosmic powers.[112]

Col. 1:15-20 exclaims in praise the cosmic Lordship of Christ. The "powers" are seen to be created through Christ! This hymn makes a demonization of the "powers" impossible. The "powers" are not intrinsically evil. Perhaps this hymn is part of an anti-Gnostic warning directed at Christians in Colossae.

However, Paul does not deny the fallenness of creation and of the "powers." The fall necessitated the victory which could only be won at the cross. The powers of astralism, fate, legalism, asceticism and philosophy are fallen.

Colossians asserts that Christ alone, not alongside others, is Lord. Colossians 2:8 draws the crucial issue: "according to the elements of the universe," ϰατά στοιχεια του ϰόσμου means "not according to Christ," οὐ ϰατα Χριστόν. Lohse writes about this verse:

> The confrontation of the elements and Christ indicates that they were conceived as personal powers. Furthermore, the context as

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[111] Lohse, p. 60. [112] Lohse's thesis; Ibid., p. 46.

> a whole shows that the elements of the universe are precisely those demonic principalities who want to exercise their tyranny over men (2:10, 15). Against this teaching about the "elements of the universe" which control men's lives and which bring demands men must satisfy (2:16-23), the clear antithesis stands: there is only one authority that can rightfully claim to be Lord over the life and conduct of the community--Christ.[113]

Colossians 2:15 announces that God has stripped the principalities and powers of their power. They are exposed for ridicule, disarmed, and disgracefully paraded publicly as defeated. These powers are not to be placed alongside Christ in the additive pattern: Christ plus the elemental spirits.

Colossians 2:20-21 is a sharp rebuke to those who claim Christ's Lordship but who live as if they still belonged to the world. The Lordship of Christ means freedom from the control of these old "powers."

The community of Christ is now Christ's body. In Christ there is forgiveness of sins and freedom from the grip of cosmic powers. The message is that "you are reconciled and the cosmos is pacified for the cosmic powers are despoiled."[114]

Berkhof, above, has eloquently interpreted Christ's Lordship over the "powers." His provocative discussion of how Christ, and we as Christ's church, disarm, make a public example of, and triumph over the principalities is an excellent exposition of Colossians' theology concerning the "powers."

An excellent example of a faithful following of the Colossian message comes from pre-World War II Germany during the rise of Hitler. Hitler was expounding a syncretist mixture of racial pride, nationalism, Christianity and bourgeoisie morality under the name of "positive

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[113] Ibid., p. 99. [114] Käsemann, Essays, p. 168.

Christianity." Many of Germany's churches supported Hitler (the German Christian Movement). In the face of this threat the "Confessing Church" gathered at Barmen to confess: "Jesus Christ, as he is proclaimed, is the one Word of God, to which we have to listen, and which we have to trust and obey in life and death."[115] In article three of the Barmen Declaration the doctrine of the church is laid out:

> As the Church of pardoned sinners it has to testify in the midst of a sinful world--with its faith as with its obedience, with its message as with its order--that it lives and wants to live solely from His comfort and from His direction in the expectation of His appearance.[116]

Truly, κατά Χριστον και οὐ κατα στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου!

Colossians has enriched our understanding of the "powers." It asserts their Christological creation and foundation; it warns against their fallen, enslaving qualities; it emphasizes the regulative/fatalistic nature of their dominion; it tells the story of the victory won over them at the cross; and, it describes their conquest in picturesque and evocative terms.

THE GALATIANS CORRESPONDENCE

The Pauline message to the Galatians is analogous to that given the Colossians. The Galatians desired another additive pattern: Christ plus the law. If there are Gentile as well as Jewish Christians in the church the stoicheia may have referred not only to the Jewish law and regulations but also to the astral and other pagan religious laws and restrictions as in the Colossian context. The issue is the same: The power of the law as the power of the elemental spirits no longer is in control. So live as free men and women. Christ alone is the Lord!

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[115] Cited in Roger Shinn, "Barmen and Ourselves" in Christianity and Crisis, Vol. 33, no. 22 (Dec. 24, 1973), p. 266. Karl Barth, who was one of the principal authors at the Barmen Declaration, uses this sentence, with slight variation, as the beginning theological sentence of Volume IV, Part 3, first half of Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961), p. 3.

[116] In Arthur Cochrane, "Barmen Revisited" in Christianity and Crisis, vol. 33, no. 22 (Dec. 24, 1973), p. 272.

Galatians 4:8-9

> Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are no gods; but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits (στοιχεῖα) whose slaves you want to be once more? (RSV)

Who are the elemental spirits in Galatians? Martin Luther emphasized the meaning of the Jewish law and all religious laws and traditions. This law can only "accuse, terrify, condemn and kill."[117] John Calvin added to Luther's meaning the elements of superstition and idolatry.[118] Lightfoot reminds us that while patristic interpretation centered around the elements as religious law and as astrological religion, the major interest was in the latter interpretation.[119] This observation is probably correct, for the early church, as it spread throughout the Hellenistic world, fought the spiritual malaise of a world gripped in a fear, anxiety and despair. Widespread was the feeling that the world was enslaved to the determinisms of fate or the caprice of evil powers.[120] The stoicheia represented agents of bondage regardless of the type--religious, cosmic, superstitious, etc.[121]

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[117] Martin Luther, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (London: James Clarke & Co., 1953), pp. 349-350.

[118] John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1854), pp. 122ff.

[119] J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (London: MacMillan & Co., 1880), p. 167.

In triumphing over the "elements" Christ has exposed them as "weak and beggarly." Law, flesh, ritual, etc., cannot save so they are weak and beggarly; they are an illusion which enslaves to false gods and hopes. The elements are not who they pretend to be. They are "beings who are no gods."

How can you, Paul asks poignantly, turn back to laws and stars, regulations and little gods, after Christ has set you free? "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1).

ROMANS: THE QUESTION OF THE AUTHORITIES

The debate has raged about the identity of ἐξουσία in Rom. 13:1-7. The options are: 1) only spiritual powers; 2) only earthly magistrates (e.g., Kittel and Käsemann); 3) a coincidence of earthly and spiritual powers (e.g., Cullmann and Morrison).[122] In light of all the passages studied, the third position seems most adequate. I take this position not because I believe that it can be proven textually or linguistically that Paul absolutely meant one position or the other, but because, as Cullmann has shown, the third option does most justice to the overall

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[120] See Eric Robertson Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety (Cambridge: University Press, 1965).

[121] Here, too, agrees Earnest DeWitt Burton, The Epistle to the Galatians (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921), pp. 215-216.

[122] See note 63 above for references to the various positions on this debate.

New Testament picture of earthly and spiritual "powers" and because, as Morrison has shown, this picture of a coincidence of earthly and spiritual powers was an ordinary component of a first century Hellenistic world view.

However, even though the third position reflects the implicit cosmological assumption regarding the State in Paul's time and place, Käsemann is correct in emphasizing that the primary reference to exousia in Romans 13:1-7 is to the earthly magistrates and holders of power.[123] I think Käsemann is correct in seeing the passage as an anti-enthusiastic or anti-gnostic warning such as he might have given to the Corinthians as well.[124] The enthusiasts, who believed that the kingdom had come and that in their new angelic status they were no longer responsible for obeying rules or laws, might well have threatened disobedience to the State for this reason. Gnostics may have regarded the State as an evil demonic power never to be obeyed. Indeed, this is the issue Irenaeus probably faced[125] as he asserted that when Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7,

> . . . he spake these words, not in regard to angelic powers, nor of invisible rulers--as some venture to expound the passage--but

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[123] Ernst Käsemann, "Principles of Interpretation of Romans 13," New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 196-216 (hereafter NTQ). See also his An die Römer (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1974), pp. 334-344 for the same arguments.

[124] NTQ, see esp. p. 206. Frank Stagg follows Käsemann here in "Rendering to Caesar What Belongs to Caesar: Christian Engagement with the World," Journal of Church and State, 18 (Winter, 1976), pp. 95-113. Paul Minear, The Obedience of Faith (Napierville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1971) also locates a Roman libertinistic group, "the strong in faith" and sees Romans 13:1-7 as a caution to them.

[125] John Lawson, The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus (London: The Epworth Press, 1948), p. 69.

of those of actual human authorities.[126]

God, not the Devil, established governments. Indeed, the Devil lied when he told Jesus that "all these (governments) are delivered unto me."[127] Paul's concern was to remind the enthusiasts that the kingdom had not yet fully come and that God had established rules pertaining to everyday living which had not been abolished. In this pursuit Paul, contends Käsemann, "argues the separation of creation and the new age!"[128] Käsemann's own theological position becomes clearer as he debates Barth's Christological interpretation of the State in Romans 13 and argues that earthly institutions, except the believing community, cannot be grounded in Christology.[129] Here is the crux of the debate between Cullmann and Barth on one hand and Käsemann on the other. They both would argue that Paul prevents both a demonization (gnostic-cult) and also a divinization (emperor-cult) of the State. What distinguishes them is that Cullmann and Barth argue for a Christological foundation for the State whereas Käsemann argues against it. It is true that Romans 13:1-7 has no reference to Christ (Käsemann). However, if one considers this passage in the context of other "powers" passages, in the context of the Hellenistic world view and in the context of other Christological confessions which point to the Lordship of Christ over the "powers," then one may fairly interpret the State as having a Christological foundation. What this foundation means theologically we must consider carefully below. I take the theological position shared by Cullmann,

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[126] Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 5.24.1 in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 552.

[127] Ibid., 5.24.1-2 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, I, p. 552).

[128] NTQ, p. 211.

[129] Ibid., p. 207.

Barth and Morrison, while affirming an anti-enthusiast interpretation of the Romans passage as it pertains to Paul's specific message to the Roman congregation.

In order to gain a more wholistic New Testament perspective on the "powers," it is important to look at a comparison of Romans 13:1-7 and Revelation 13. This comparison does illuminate a crucial issue in the meaning of Christ's relationship with the principality of the State as well as other "powers."[130]

The State of Rom. 13 gets its authority from God. The State of Rev. 13 gets its authority from Satan (the dragon) and from the citizenry who worship it, "prostrating themselves in front of the dragon, and in front of the beast saying, "Who can compare with the beast? How could anybody defeat him?"--a gripping, ironic perversion of the Psalmist's cry, "Who can compare with Yahweh?" (Psalm 89). The State of Romans 13 knows its limits; the State of Revelation 13 pretends to be God.

Here is a basic issue in our study of the "powers." As part of God's design they are not essentially demonic. As they grasp for, or are given, ultimacy, they become demonic. Tillich's categories are well applied here. The issue of idolatry is in the forefront.

CONCLUSION

With the help cited above from Oscar Cullmann, we can place the "powers" within a scheme of redemptive history which clarifies a wholistic New Testament picture.

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[130] See Appendix for an antiphonal litany of these passages.

The "Powers" in Redemptive History: A Summary

I. The "powers" are part of the created order. They are created in, through, and for Christ (Col. 1:15-20). Therefore they are to be servants and instruments of God's purpose in the created realm, ordering and preserving, and even sometimes participating in, Christ's redeeming.

II. As man fell from God's design so did all of creation including nature and the principalities and powers. So instead of serving God's purpose they tend to oppose it. The ultimate expression of their perverted will is seen in their participation in the crucifixion of Jesus (I Cor. 2:6-8).

III. In the cross and resurrection God triumphs over the "powers" (Col. 2:14ff.). He disarms them and makes a public example of them, exposing them as "weak and beggarly" (Gal. 4:8-10).

IV. The cross/resurrection was an eschatological event setting up an already/not yet tension in the world. The victory is won but not consummated. We live between D-Day and V-Day (Cullmann). The "powers" are defeated but not destroyed. Christ's Lordship has inaugurated an eschatological struggle between the church and the "powers." The "powers" are still free to assert their demonic capabilities but cannot defeat God's ultimate purpose and victory (Rom. 8:35ff.). We do battle with the "powers," as they become demonic, armed with the weapons of faith (Eph. 6:10ff.). We call the fallen "powers" to their original purpose--to serve God and the good of man.

V. The battle will continue until the last "power," death, is defeated (I Cor. 15:24ff.).

This summary discloses the nature of the "powers": they are created for a good purpose, fallen from that purpose, not necessarily evil but potentially demonic. Their "necessity" based in ordering, preserving, and protecting the world from chaos is established until the end of the age. However, the Lordship of Christ means that their function cannot be separated from God's redemptive work in Christ.

The "Powers": An Interpretation

The place and nature of the "powers" has been stated. Now we consider the function of the "powers" in Paul's day as the prelude to interpretation. We will consider all of the functions of the "powers" in our study for two reasons. First, not just Paul's understanding (redaction criticism) but also his hearer's understandings (audience criticism) are important for the purposes of proper interpretation. Secondly, the either/or debate between Hellenistic background or Jewish background is a misguided one because of the fluid and deep intermingling of all the various traditions in the Hellenistic age. There are not the neat distinctons between Hellenism and Judaism in the first century A. D. that were once thought.[131] Also, in Paul's list of "powers" he seems to be pointing to the myriad of different powers in a representative fashion.

So we now turn to the various kinds of "powers" of Paul's days and to their function in people's lives. There are five categories of "powers": 1) The principalities and powers, governments and authorities. These were a combination of earthly potentates, civil and religious, and spiritual powers behind them. These structural realities of the world have spiritual as well as physical powers. These "powers" order life and so provide an essential function. They also have demonic capabilities as the Rom. 13/Rev. 13 comparison shows. Examples are Rome, the Sanhedrin, cultic and tribal leaders, the legal courts, cultural traditions and social units.

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[131] W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (New York: Harper and Row, Pub., 1967, ed.), pp. 2-16.

2) Spiritual powers and hosts who affect individuals. These "powers" interpret and present God and the world in a false way, thereby promoting unbelief and rebellion. An example is Paul's use of "flesh" as a "power" which directs us to follow our own striving, to see the world as ultimate, not passing away, and so to set our will against the plan of God. These "powers" are often under the deceitful and deceiving spell of Satan. The "powers" of untruth and of lies is important in connection with these "powers." When people of that world felt tempted by or obsessed with wrong or evil thoughts they interpreted this experience as being under the control of demons or spiritual hosts of wickedness. The term "kosmos," or world, often represented a sea of influences, forces, and realities set against God and man.

3) Death, life, present, future, height, depth. In first century cosmology these function as natural, biological, and historical determinants: the burdens, guilts of the past, the fear of future, the unknown forces which affect human life (e.g., crop production or failure).

4) Name, titles. Spiritual/human forces were associated with titles and special names--Caesar, emperor, kurios, shaman, priest, savior. The authority of a title over a person's life was well known in political and cultic life.

5) Elements of the world. a) Natural elements sometimes thought to possess spiritual life and force (animism)--earth, wind, fire, water,

mountain, tree, etc.; cult worship around sacred elements. b) Astral forces--stars and other heavenly bodies which govern life, fate, determinism. Also, astral deities were thought to control stars and thereby all life. c) Jewish and cultic law--legal restrictions, ascetism; philosophies; mystery religion and gnostic cults; religious tradition and cultural/tribal tradition.

These together represent all of the supra-personal or extra-personal forces of life existing outside an individual and exerting influence on him. The invisible realm was the realm of unseen influences and mysterious powers. Examples: The power of another "wicked" nation was ascribed to the angel over it; the omnivorous power of Rome over citizens' lives; the psychological power of a sorceress, shaman or cult priest; the mysterious course of weather, history and fortune were ascribed to "powers." It appears that almost every force outside of man's individual personhood was ascribed to "powers," either good or bad, from God or Satan or "Fate." The course of a man's life was at stake by the decisions he made concerning the "powers."

The "Powers": A Contemporary Interpretation

Our hermeneutic is the matching of the function of the "powers" in Paul's day to a similar function of various entities today--a functional-phenomenological approach. The question asked here is: What powers "outside" of persons today exert similar or analogous power/influence as the "powers" of Paul?

Is the sociological framework of Berger and Luckmann sufficient to establish the objective reality of social constructions? We think so. Social realities which are constructed by man do become "objectivated" realities, and so act back on man. The assumption that social institutions are no more than the people who make them up is näive. The reality of social constructions like mores, customs, and ideals also have a reality apart from persons and exert influence. As explained by Peter Berger, these objectivated social realities, when internalized, change the subjective structures of our consciousness. Man's "world" can make man a victim or a bond slave. Bultmann acknowledges this conclusion as one reached by Paul: the "world" is the sphere of anti-godly power under whose sway the individual has fallen.

> Then the eerie fact is that the "kosmos," the world of men, constituted by that which the individual does and upon which he bestows his care, itself gains the upper hand over the individual. The "kosmos" comes to constitute an independent super-self over all individual selves.[132]

We can observe here the objective or "objectivated" character of the power. It is more obvious that institutions are objective realities than, for example, mores or ideologies, but all these realities exist outside individuals and exert a force or power. When they are in some cases internalized, they can shape to a significant degree a person's life and thought.

The question of the "ontological" basis of these "powers" is an important philosophical and theological issue, particularly when their demonic capacities are at issue. Does evil have an ontological reality? A constructive distinction can be made between the "ontological" and the "ontic."[133] Something ontological has being in and of itself.

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[132] Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 256-257.

[133] Professor Frank Tupper makes this distinction in his systematic theology lectures on evil.

Something "ontic" has being only in a parasitic relationship to an ontological being as it draws upon another being for its own life. In this sense all of the "powers" are ontic powers deriving their being from God and man. A "demon" has no ontological being, but it does have ontic significance as it draws upon the life, thought, and imagination of persons. Those "demonic" powers which exist as demonic per se (e.g., group two above) are ontic and not ontological. For example, the delusional and psychotic person might hear a voice telling him or her to kill someone or to do something embarrassing in public. This voice does not have ontological being, i.e., as a "demon" whispering in one's ear, but it does have ontic being exerting force in that person's life. When an institution grasps demonically for ultimate power that demonic "more" for which it reaches, or which it is given, is a "more" that is "ontic." It feeds off and draws upon human life for its power. In every case we may say the "power" is objective or objectivated. Theologically we say therefore that the "demonic" is not created or intended by God, but it is nonetheless a possibility for all created life and is most "real."

Four Theological Motifs Concerning the "Powers" Derived from the New Testament Texts

1. Eschatology and Ethics: The "powers" understood eschatologically. Eschatology means the doctrine of last things. It refers to the end of history and to the future. As the end of history impinges upon the present, the present exists in eschatological tension. The tension is between the kingdom of God and the course of history. The presence of the kingdom of God sets up the eschatological tension between the

"already" of the kingdom and the "not yet," or to use Cullman's image, between D-Day and V-Day. We proclaim Christ's Lordship over the "powers" and at the same time enter into struggle, an eschatological struggle, with them until the final victory of God. Therefore, we object to the "realized eschatology" of the Corinthian enthusiasts (an isolation of the "already") and to the totally futuristic eschatology of Jewish apocalyptic (an isolation of the "not yet"). We deny the idealistic optimism of that nineteenth century liberalism which saw the kingdom of God on earth marching inevitably and progressively to victory and also deny the moral cynicism and/or otherworldliness of those who locate the victory of Christ totally in the future or only beyond history. Our age exists in eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet." The eschatological battle is between Christ and the "powers," or between the values of the kingdom of God and the anti-human values of the old age. In this sense it is a battle at the juncture of the ages.

2. The Lordship of Christ over the "powers." What is the nature of Christ's Lordship? His Lordship means different things in relation to different kinds of "powers." In terms of institutional "powers," it means that they were created through him and for him and are recommissioned through the cross in his service which is the service to humanity. The norms which Jesus Christ set up are relevant for institutions. This is not to say that their application is simple or their implementation automatic. It is to say that Christ's will is their inner meaning and goal. As Karl Barth so vigorously set forth, this does not mean that the institutions obey some natural law or mandate as an order of creation or preservation, but that they have an

ideal set forth by Jesus Christ. Therefore I would, along with Barth, call the State an order of redemption instead of an order of creation or preservation. Understood eschatologically, the State is not now actually an order of redemption but is essentially and potentially so. Understood politically, this means that one can neither be morally cynical nor näively utopian about the State.

In terms of those powers which are or become demonic, Christ's Lordship means their destruction. Christ's victory over evil is a present and future reality.

In terms of the "powers" in general, Christ's Lordship denies their lordship. They are "beings who are no gods." Christ's Lordship is a limit to their power.

We need to discuss here the issue of the objective and/or subjective nature of Christ's victory over the powers. At this point Morrison finds Cullmann's theology most difficult. In what sense are the powers "leashed" by the cross/resurrection event? Morrison asks whether Rome was in fact objectively different the week after the resurrection than the week before.[134] What we have in the New Testament are assurances that Christ and not the "powers" will prevail. To use imagery like Cullmann's of powers "running out their leash" presents innumerable theological problems. Why is there the leash? How long is the leash? His D-Day/V-Day image is better as it describes our period as one between the decisive battle and the final victory.

Morrison seeks to avoid the theological problems connected with affirming an objective transactional work of Christ upon the "powers" at the cross by concluding that the "powers" themselves were not transformed in their character at the cross. He interprets the Col. 2:15ff. passage as describing not what happened to the powers but what has happened to Christians who live "in Christ." Here "then is not a statement concerning the 'powers' per se but the Christian's relationship to the powers."[135] Morrison concludes, ". . . the locus of Christ's work cannot be the cosmic powers, but is the Church."[136] I agree with Morrison on the importance of the subjective nature of Christ's victory at the cross in relationship to the "powers." I however would alter his last statement this way: The locus of Christ's work is the cosmos and not just the church, though the church represents a special and intensified manifestation of his work. It is an important Christian confession that Christ is Lord not just of the church but also of the world. Christ is winning the eschatological battle with the "powers" sometimes through the church and sometimes outside the church.

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[134] Morrison, op. cit., p. 114f.

The Cullmann-Morrison debate on the subjective/objective nature of Christ's victory over the "powers" demonstrates the inadequacy of the conceptual categories themselves. Morrison puts the activity of the church in the subjective realm; but is not the church one of the objective consequences of Christ's work? Cullmann uses the imagery of a leash to describe Christ's objective victory; but isn't the leash administered through human agency? Is the collapse of Roman civil theology an objective or subjective victory? Christian theology humanized Roman civil law. Is this process the objective work of Christ or the human appropriation of Christ's victory? It is important to acknowledge the objective and subjective components of Christ's victory. Perhaps it is better to use different terms and say that Christ's victory over the "powers" was real, yet not completed. The battle meanwhile is being victoriously waged as Christians wearing the whole armor of God fight alongside Christ against the "powers."

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[135] Ibid., p. 117. [136] Ibid., p. 139.

To be assured that Christ is winning and shall win the battle with the "powers" does not rob history and human action of importance. The battle is not being won over our heads but in our midst. An example is seen in Hitler's rise and fall. To say the *militia Christi* will win over the *militia diaboli* is not to say that what humans did to oppose Hitler was meaningless. It was better to defeat Hitler in 1944 than in 1951. It would have been even better for the Christians in Germany to oppose him in his rise to power. Untold suffering would have been averted.

To say that Christ will win relates as well to the mode of our participation in his victory. To oppose Hitler may well have been in Christ's battle plans. *How* we fought him may not have been in his battle plans. We must ask if we became Hitler in order to beat him. We shall discuss below the relation of means and ends in the eschatological battle.

In conclusion, to say that Christ is Lord over the "powers" means that Christ has won the decisive victory over the powers. The eschatological reserve reminds us that the consummation is "not yet" and so a divination of the "powers" is inappropriate. Christ's Lordship also signifies that the foundation, norm, and goal of the "powers" is in Christ. This means that the norms of agape and justice which find their content in the Old and New Testaments apply to the "powers." Therefore, we cannot be morally cynical about the "powers." They exist for and through Christ and on behalf of human beings.

3. The "powers" as fallen. Instituted by God, created through Christ, the "powers" nonetheless rebel against God and are fallen. Their fall is an analogue of our fall as persons. As our fall describes our rebellion against God, our separation from his double commandment to love God with our whole being and to love our neighbor as ourselves, the fall of the "powers" describes their rebellion against their own call to serve human ends and to assist God's power in the world "to make and to keep human life human."[137] Because they are fallen, they cannot be divinized or identified with God. Because not only the individuals who make up the "powers," but the "powers" themselves are fallen, the redemption of individuals is not enough to cause the redemption of the "powers."

Even though the "powers" are fallen, they are not necessarily demonic. Therefore, they cannot summarily be demonized. Some of the "powers" operate demonically; others do not. The powers as fallen can still be operating in an ordering or preserving function. In this role they are maintaining a minimum and not maximum purpose for which they were created. They still are called by the Lordship of Christ beyond this minimum function to the humanizing service of humankind. Their true calling is part of the redemptive activity of God; for they were created through and for Christ (Col. 1:16) and Christ is their head (Eph. 1:21).

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[137] Paul Lehmann's famous phrase describing "What God is doing in the World," in Ethics in a Christian Context (New York: Harper and Row, Pub., 1963). "The Christian koinonia is the foretaste and sign in the world that God has always been and is contemporaneously doing what it takes to make and to keep human life human. This is the will of God 'as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end,'" p. 101.

4. The "powers" as demonic. The powers as a whole are potentially but not necessarily demonic. Of course, the New Testament virtually identifies some of the "powers" as demonic and surely some of the powers seem to have an intrinsically demonic character. However, my position in regards to the "powers" as a whole is this: the "powers" are those objectivated social constructions and realities which now act back upon persons. Their power reaches man in more objective ways, as an institution imposes its rules and regulation, and in more subjective ways, as internalization of social mores alters our consciousness. These powers become demonic when they grasp for, or are given, ultimate or final significance.

Paul Tillich's definition of the demonic as basically idolatry serves us well. "The claim of anything finite to be final in its own right is demonic."[138] Tillich interprets the Pauline imagery of Christ's victory over the "powers" this way:

> According to Paul, the demonic-idolatrous powers which rule the world and distort religion have been conquered in the cross of Christ. In his cross Jesus sacrificed that medium of revelation which impressed itself on his followers as messianic in power and significance. For us this means that in following him we are liberated from the authority of everything finite in him . . . .[139]

The personal self as well as the group or collective can fall victim to the demonic.

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[138] Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 134. See also his The Interpretation of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 77-122.

[139] Ibid.

In the person there is the possibility of self worship or of domination by another finite reality.[140] Tillich calls the former "autonomous man" and the latter "heteronomous man." It is "theonomous man" that battles and conquers demonization.[141] "Theonomy stands in opposition to the predominance of the demonic."[142]

The demonic also operates in the collective social or institutional level. When a person offers unconditional allegiance to an institution the demonic appears. Religion can become demonic as an "holy demonry"[143] (e.g., Dostoievsky's Grand Inquisitor). The State becomes demonic when it is sacralized. Tillich therefore asserts:

> The battle against the demonries of our time becomes an unavoidable, religious-political duty. Political activity gains the deeper meaning of religious activity. Religious activity gains the concreteness of a struggle against the "principalities and powers."[144]

These social demonries take on a spiritual as well as institutional power over individuals. In 1936 Tillich identified what he considered the two modern demonries: "They are the demonries of autonomous economics: capitalism, and the demonry of the sovereign people: nationalism."[145] Today the autonomy of international corporations, communism, militarism and technology serve as examples.

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[140] This finite force may be external or may be internal as one of our life forces. Tillich said, "It is the vital forces which support the living form; but when they become overpowerful and withdraw from the arrangement within the embracing organic form, they are destructive principles." The Interpretation of History, op. cit., p. 78.

[141] Systematic Theology, I, pp. 84ff., 147ff.

[142] Paul Tillich, Political Expectations (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 66.

[143] Tillich, The Interpretation of History, op. cit., p. 80.

[144] Ibid., p. 116. [145] Ibid., p. 119.

Christ defeats the demonic as only the divine can by limiting the ultimate pretensions of finite realities. As Tillich says it: "Demonry breaks down only before divinity, the possessed state before the state of grace . . . ."[146]

Tillich's definition of the demonic is helpful in identifying the most obvious forms of the demonic. This definition of the demonic is important in determining when the "powers" become overtly demonic and therefore provoke the resistance of Christians.

The definition is less helpful when we engage the more ambiguous ethical dilemmas concerning shades of gray where the "powers" exert characteristics which fall short of their calling under the Lordship of Christ but which have not yet descended into demonic fury. They are clearly fallen but are not yet demonic, that is, they do not yet pretend divine authority. The fallen/demonic distinction is not to be construed to mean that as long as the "powers" do not become overtly demonic the Christian has nothing to say to them. The Christian is always calling the powers into the service of humankind. Christ's values of love and justice are always its norms. There is a continuum in degrees of evil from fallenness to demonism. Correction is needed at all steps along the continuum. The nature of our resistance to, and correction of, the "powers" corresponds to the point on that continuum where a particular "power" exercises its dominion.

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[146] Ibid., p. 122.

The "Powers" Today

We have presented the nature and the function of the "powers" according to the New Testament texts studied and have derived four theological motifs concerning the "powers" and Christ's relationship to them. Using our functional hermeneutic, we now enumerate the "powers" of our day, presenting them in corresponding order to the five groups listed above.

Group One--Social institutions and structures. These "powers" have spiritual as well as physical power over persons. Many of these perform a necessary ordering and preserving function. The prime example is the State, probably the most powerful principality because it has gathered so many of the other "powers" under its wings--technology, science, the military, business, etc. Other examples are: the judicial system, corporations, the nation, the nuclear family, the city, labor unions, the university, the professions and professional societies, etc. These "powers" become demonic as they grasp or are given ultimate power and authority (as the beast of Revelation 13). Their fallenness is equally obvious to our eyes. The State serves the vested interests of the people in power instead of the whole people. The "military-industrial complex" is a cohesion of "powers" which has its own "religious" values and assumptions. Max Stackhouse has described these values in terms of a civil theology of national defense, a pessimistic anthropology and a religion of "disciplined authority." The perverted result of their values is an "ethics of necropolis."[147] The judicial system established for protection of human rights is nonetheless guilty of unequal justice by serving the lawyers, whose profession monopolizes it, and the rich more than all of the people. Corporations, quickly becoming international in scope and autonomous in power, exhibit monopolistic tendencies and control millions of lives, the lives of their employees and the economies used as labor markets. The university and theological seminary too easily make the institution, its tradition, structure and reputation, the object of primary importance rather than the student or the society for whose service the student is being educated. Competition between disciplines fractures collegiality in learning: cost-analysis budgeting determines academic policy. Professional societies become lobby agencies and protective agents to insulate the professions from the people they are said to serve instead of assisting them in this service.

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[147] Max L. Stackhouse, The Ethics of Necropolis (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), esp. pp. 72-93.

Group Two--The powers which interpret the world to persons, promoting unbelief and whipping up religious intensity in penultimate objects. Here we confront the ideologies and philosophies of the world; examples are communism and psycho-analysis as a belief-system. These ideologies pretend an ultimate grasp on the truth by raising a finite clue to the meaning of reality to the level of the truth. They lift partial truth to religious and therefore demonic dimensions. They project an explanation of evil and pain, divinize the problems of the world, offer the solution, and invite religious devotion. Often this allegiance reaches fanatical proportion, particularly when a battle between ideologies is going on, for example, between capitalism and communism.

Propaganda, Freudianism (or any other psychological theory if it pretends to explain all of reality), and Marxism are examples, as is the consumeristic advertising industry. The ideals of beauty, womanhood, manhood, success, etc., can be so internalized as to control our lives. A girl commits suicide because she feels her non-cover-girl looks doom her to rejection. A man's image of manhood may distort his feelings, values, and responsibilities. Society's sexist view of women, or racist view of non-whites, distorts and destroys human relationships and personhood. An ideal or more can become obsessive in a personality and therefore take on demonic manifestations. Manson's helter-skelter philosophy, American football's win-at-all-costs philosophy, Captain Ahab's desire to kill Moby Dick, are all examples of a philosophy or a goal become demonic.

Group Three--The "powers" of death, life, the past, future, etc. These "powers" are natural, biological and historical determinants. Natural determinants are death, race (Volk), weather, ecology. These forces can be used to hurt others, to deprive (racism), or to engender a naturalistic determinism. Biological forces include the instinct of self-preservation, sexual energy, the structure of the psyche, or the power of the unconscious mind. These become demonic when they turn into ultimate determinants or forces. Lust is the demonic obsession with sex in collaboration with distortions of the will as a means of power and self-aggrandizement. Historical determinants are: class, shame and tradition, the future as fear, and the group psychology of nations, tribes and families which influence historical events such as wars, insurrections, feuds. "National interest," family pride, racial and class consciousness, the ghetto, and the slave labor markets are historical determinants. The poor white laborer's plaintiff song, "I owe my soul to the company store" is analogous to black spirituals, such as "Go Down, Moses," crying out against enslavement to the "powers."

Group Four--Names and titles. These powers represent the power of official titles, roles and offices. Examples are the "Imperial Presidency," the Party, der Führer, the Pope, husband, wife and chief. To illustrate, some Watergate defendants testified that when a request came from the "Office of the President" there was no further question raised as to right or wrong. A religious or political title often has a superstitious hold over people, for example, a papal decree or a presidential address. Another example is the traditionally chauvinistic power of a husband over the decisions of his wife. Names and titles become demonic when they manipulate or distort human social relationships. Today a labor union leader by virtue of his office can decide autonomously whether to present an offer for vote by the union members.

Group Five--"Elements of the world" include: 1) natural-biological forces; 2) false determinisms; and 3) religious legalism and cultural moralism. The natural and biological powers have been discussed in Group Three. False determinisms are philosophies which interpret the world and the movement of history as determined and not free. Examples are biological determinism, dialectical materialism, behaviorism, the belief in fate, nihilism and astrology. Religious and cultic legalisms include moralistic world views, the elevation of laws above the gospel, asceticism and libertinism (the law of permissiveness--the tyranny of having to say yes), Bill Gothard's authoritarian Christianity, and transcendental meditation. At issue here is the regulation of life by law and tradition. We can also consider the sometimes incredible power of social mores, public values, and popular opinion. De Tocqueville, looking at America in the nineteenth century, saw the danger of "the tyranny of the majority." When finite regulative structures like law and tradition take divine proportions they themselves become social demonries. Sometimes, particularly in chaotic periods of history, the hunger for stability and order becomes so dear that a demonically oppressive order is welcomed.

The list could be much longer, but a representative selection and a functional analogy between the "powers" of Paul's day and our day has been presented. Paul's concept of the principalities and powers are most relevant today. Nixon was no less under the influence of "powers" (the military-industrial-scientific complex) as he ordered blanket bombings of Indo-China than was Pilate when he supervised the crucifixion of Jesus (I Cor. 2:8). An IBM executive's life is no less controlled by his corporation than a first century man's life was controlled by Apollo or Dionysus or The Imperium. A person will starve today because of a nation's allegiance to an ideology just as a first century person died of exposure because of religious taboos. The determinisms of a mass media controlled consciousness are just as real as those of a sorceress in ancient Cyprus. The principalities and powers are a significant factor in modern life, and the New Testament theology concerning them should be of concern to us.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have surveyed different theological approaches to the "powers" in the New Testament; we have studied particular New Testament texts dealing with the "powers"; we have interpreted the "powers" via a functional hermeneutic according to five different groups of phenomena in today's world; and, we have isolated four theological motifs which concern the issue of Christ and the "powers."

As we turn to the next five chapters of this dissertation we shall be concerned with one representative of the "powers"--social institutions, principally the State. The central problem is the relationship of Christ to the social and structural powers in today's world. We will seek to clarify five representative positions American theologians have presented in the effort to clarify Christ's relationship to these "powers." The five positions are: 1) The Social Gospel Theology of Walter Rauschenbusch--Christ Transforming the "Powers"; 2) The Christian Realism of Reinhold Niebuhr--Christ Transcendent and Relevant to the "Powers"; 3) The Conservative Theology of Eric Voegelin--God of the "Powers" and Christ Separated from the "Powers"; 4) The Resistance Theology of William Stringfellow, Jacques Ellul and Daniel Berrigan--Christ Against the "Powers"; 5) The Black Liberation Theology of James Cone: Christ Conquering the "Powers." Each position will be evaluated in light of our New Testament picture of the "powers" and of our four theological motifs: 1) the eschatological battle with the "powers"; 2) Christ as Lord of the "powers"; 3) the "powers" as fallen; and 4) the "powers" as demonic.

Chapter 2

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL THEOLOGY OF WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH: CHRIST TRANSFORMING THE POWERS

The American theological context is a rich one in which to analyze the various ways Christ has been related to the structural institutions and realities of the world, for a central concern of American religion has always been "social Christianity." H. Richard Niebuhr's important work, The Kingdom of God in America,[1] beautifully demonstrated the fact that the kingdom of God has been the dominant idea in American Christianity. Its form has changed emphases, from the sovereignty of God in early Puritanism to the Reign of Christ in Awakening piety to the kingdom on earth in the Social Gospel,[2] but the passionate relevance of the gospel for the social realm of life has been a common thread, perhaps even the common fabric of American Christianity.[3] From John Winthrop's "Citty upon a Hill," to the theocrat's "Nation Under God," to Walter Rauschenbusch's "Kingdom of God," to Martin Luther King's "Beloved Community," to Jimmy Carter's "competent and compassionate America," the social dimension of Christianity has been stressed.

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[1] H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Niebuhr's basic thesis has been confirmed by many prominent American Church historians; for example, Sydney E. Ahlstrom in A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

The contemporary theological scene cannot be evaluated apart from the two men who have most shaped American social Christianity in this century, Walter Rauschenbusch and Reinhold Niebuhr. We cannot properly understand our more contemporary forms of social Christianity apart from them and their influence; moreover, their own distinctive forms of social Christianity are still very much with us despite their weaknesses and despite the degrees to which they, as all theological forms, reflect the age in which they were conceived.

In this chapter I shall present the way Walter Rauschenbusch related Christ and the structural powers of the world. In the next chapter I shall present the theological position of Reinhold Niebuhr. Because of the massive quantity of secondary literature on both of these men, I shall not try to elucidate their theology as a whole. Rather, I shall present the representative nature of their particular positions on how Christ is related to the structural powers. I term Rauschenbusch's position, "Christ Transforming the Powers." Although I agree with H. Richard Niebuhr that the Social Gospel, along with Ritschl, found "in Jesus the great exponent of man's religious and ethical culture,"[4] I do not place Rauschenbusch simply in a "Christ of Culture" position. He called for the "Christianization" of the social structures so that they would reflect the values of Christ; the work of Christ and his church was to transform the "powers."

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[4] Christ and Culture (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1956), p. 101. An obvious indebtedness is expressed to H. Richard Niebuhr's Christ and Culture just as Niebuhr himself acknowledged his indebtedness to Ernst Troeltsch's typology in The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches. One person's typology is both an elucidation and a challenge. We learn from it and we want to modify it so the pieces "fit" better within our own understanding. Such is the relationship of this dissertation to Niebuhr's work. My "types" are not the same as Niebuhr's though some are similar. Therefore I will define my own types. The representative nature of my types depicts not so much standard trans-historical types as representative options discovered in the modern American context.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

The Social Gospel has been called by many observers America's most distinctive theological contribution.[5] Robert Handy is correct in stating that whereas the Social Gospel in America was part of a developing world-wide interest in social Christianity, for example, England's Frederick Maurice and Charles Kingsley, and Europe's Ritschl, Ragaz and Kutter, it was "fundamentally indigenous."[6]

Although the Social Gospel was influenced by the ethical impulse of European liberalism and by the new sociology and economics developing in Europe (which Richard Ely brought home to America), there are four American influences which were to stamp the Social Gospel as American. The first is the sociological context of rapid urbanization and industrialization. Chicago, for example, grew from a mere village in 1833 to the fifth largest city in the world in 1900, seeking to employ, house and feed 1,698,575 people.[7] The great problems besetting the rise of the cities were to preoccupy the political leaders and intellectuals of America between the Civil War and the first World War. The pathos of the huddled masses of poverty were to evoke the passion of the religious leaders as well. The Social Gospel whose roots reach back into the 1870's reached its zenith in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

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[5] Willem A. Visser' T. Hooft, The Background of the Social Gospel in America (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1928), p. 186f.; Sydney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, op. cit.

[6] Robert T. Handy, The Social Gospel in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 4.

[7] Ahlstrom, op. cit., p. 735.

The second factor is the influence of the Puritan ideal of the Holy Commonwealth. The reshaping of society was one of the tasks of the church. The godly man was to be part of a righteous community, and God's sovereignty extended beyond the perimeter of the church community to embrace the civil community.

A third often ignored factor is the evangelical roots of the Social Gospel. Timothy L. Smith's important work, Revivalism and Social Reform,[8] has reminded us that urban revivalism of the mid-nineteenth century possessed the evangelical impulses of Christian perfection, millenarian fervor, humanitarian concern and Arminian industry which prepared the way for the Social Gospel. H. R. Niebuhr termed this social-evangelical ideal "the Reign of Christ."

The fourth influence was the "new theology" among whose progenitors was Horace Bushnell and whose earliest Social Gospel proponent was Washington Gladden. This new theology is most accurately called "evangelical liberalism." Liberalism as a whole was an important intellectual movement dealing with the social, moral and theological crises arising in post Civil War America. Ahlstrom characterizes liberalism as consisting of a free and open spirit, an Arminian anthropology, an emphasis on morality and religious education, a fervent optimism, the centrality of the religion of Jesus, and philosophical monism.[9] Major types of liberalism divided themselves on two issues: on the nature of religion and on the nature of revelation. The three types divided on the nature of religion were: ethical religion (W. Rauschenbusch), experiential religion (William James), and philosophical religion (Josiah Royce and Henry N. Wieman).[10] The two types divided on the issue of revelation were, according to Kenneth Cauthen's important work,[11] evangelical liberalism and modernistic liberalism. Evangelical liberals[12] (William Adams Brown, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and Walter Rauschenbusch) were mediating theologians, "serious Christians" who wanted to develop a Christian theology which could be believed by "intelligent moderns." They wished to maintain continuity with the Christian tradition and proceeded methodologically as Christocentric theologians. Modernistic liberals[13] took modern thought as their point of departure and kept those parts of Christian tradition which fit into the presuppositions of modern science, philosophy, psychology and sociology. Members of this second group were Shailer Mathews, D. C. Macintosh and Henry N. Wieman.

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[8] Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957). See also the indispensable secondary source by Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 20f. Hopkins, however, doesn't stress the evangelical influence nearly as much as Smith.

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

Walter Rauschenbusch epitomized Social Gospel theology as an evangelical liberal who emphasized the ethical nature of religion. Reinhold Niebuhr's famous evaluation of Rauschenbusch as "not only the real founder of social Christianity in this country but also its most brilliant and generally satisfying exponent to this present day"[14] still stands. Born in a pietist German Baptist home in Rochester, New York, 1861, Rauschenbusch always retained the pietism of religious experience along with the ethical call of Jesus' kingdom of God. The "tender, mysterious experience" of his conversion as a young man was never forgotten but was supplemented by the ideal of the "perfect community of men." This "perfect community" Rauschenbusch called the kingdom of God: "With God above them; with their brother next to them--clasping hands in fraternity, doing the work of justice--that is the kingdom of God."[15]

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[9] Ahlstrom, op. cit., pp. 779f. [10] Ahlstrom, pp. 781ff.

[11] Kenneth Cauthen, The Impact of American Religious Liberalism (New York: Harper and Row, Pub., 1962).

[12] Ibid., pp. 27ff.

[13] Ibid., pp. 29ff.

Influences upon him were many. Graduate study in Germany introduced him to Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Harnack, and German sociologists. Henry George, author of Progress and Poverty and political advocate of the single tax, "awakened" Rauschenbusch "to the world of social problems."[16] But to be sure, the most formative influence upon him was his first pastorate at the edge of Hell's Kitchen in New York City. The gripping plight of the poor, the needless death of little children and the startling gap between the rich and the poor challenged his life and faith as a Christian and drove him to discover that teaching of Jesus which answered his new questions and satisfied his discontent with orthodox Christianity. In his own words, "So, Christ's conception of the kingdom of God came to me as a new revelation . . . . It responded to all the old and all the new elements of my religious life."[17]

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[14] Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York: Harper Brothers, 1935), p. 1.

[15] Handy, op. cit., p. 267; good autobiographical section in Handy, pp. 264-267; and biographical section by Handy, pp. 253-263; for other biographical data see D. R. Sharpe, Walter Rauschenbusch (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1942). For an excellent study of his use of scripture see Allen Dale Verhey, The Use of Scripture in Moral Discourse: A Case Study of Walter Rauschenbusch (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1977). Yale University Ph.D. dissertation, 1975. See also Rauschenbusch's The Righteousness of the Kingdom (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968) which dates from his Hell's Kitchen ministry; now edited by Max L. Stackhouse.

[16] Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912), p. 394; cited hereafter as CSO.

Rauschenbusch: The Kingdoms and the "Powers"

The key to understanding "Christ and the powers" in Rauschenbusch's thought is in his understanding of "The kingdom of God" in juxtaposition to "the kingdom of Evil." These two conceptions will now be presented, followed by an exposition of the role of the church in the battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Evil. In this chapter we shall see Rauschenbusch as a prophet of his time and for our time as well as his own.

Walter Rauschenbusch was by his own admission a child of his age. This fact made him a searing prophet in his own time. We may blush a little as we read him today, but our blush is not just at his time-bound naivete and optimism; it is also at how great the gap is still between the kingdom ideal and our failures to approximate it so many years later. He saw his time as a *kairos* for the Social Gospel--a time of deep ferment about the reevaluation and remaking of social structures. The gospel's timeless truth must incarnate itself in the most pressing questions of each time and place; we risk being a child of our times in order to represent the "Word made flesh." He said:

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[17] Ibid., p. 93.

> The gospel, to have full power over an age, must be the highest expression of the moral and religious truths held by that age . . . . In our thought today the social problems irresistibly take the lead. If the Church has no live and bold thought on this dominant question of modern life, its teaching authority on all other questions will dwindle and be despised.[18]

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God was the central motif in Rauschenbusch's theology. It meant the Reign of God. It included the regeneration of the individual and the reconstruction of society. In an early writing Rauschenbusch said,

> Every changed individual life makes a changed society possible. Every change for the better in the construction of society makes a higher perfection of the individual possible. Each is an originating center of power. Each, therefore, is a citadel to be captured in the name of God.[19]

Most simply put, the kingdom of God "is humanity organized according to the will of God."[20] Breaking with other interpretations, Rauschenbusch saw it as the righteous social order established by God and not as "heaven" or the inner life of the spirit, or as the Church, or the millenium.[21] The kingdom was nothing less than the "progressive incarnation of God."[22] Marks of the kingdom of God are: "the worth of personality, freedom, growth, love, solidarity and service."[23]

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[18] Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 339; cited hereafter as CSC.

[19] Rauschenbusch, The Righteousness of the Kingdom (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 105; cited hereafter as RK. This work is posthumously edited and introduced by Max L. Stackhouse.

[20] Walter Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1945), p. 142; cited hereafter as TSG.

[21] CSC, pp. 54-55. [22] TSG, p. 148. [23] Ibid.

Like many leading liberal theologians of his age, Rauschenbusch's theology was Christocentric. Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom of God, and his values revealed the values of the kingdom. With Christ at the center, we look backward and forward to see where the kingdom has been at work. Two key components of the kingdom were Christ's law of love and justice. Love is the act of service to one's neighbor. It is moreover the "equalizing" and "society-making impulse."[24] Love is practical and prudential because it preserves the well being of creation. The Golden Rule is an example.[25] Although he was in later years to rethink the degree to which the law of love could be applied directly to society,[26] he would always emphasize the relevance of the law of love to society. Love is not only relevant but it can change society. "In the measure in which love increases in any social organism, it will hold together without coercion."[27] The law of love was the central principle of Jesus' message. This love is the unifying impulse, the self-imparting impulse, "the bestowal of good at cost to ourselves."[28]

Justice has the same goals as love: equality and cooperation. Love builds its "temple" on the foundation of justice.[29] "As justice is the condition of good will between individuals, so it is the foundation of the social order . . . . Nations die of legalized injustice."[30] Justice is a basic requirement which society should demand. Charity as sentimental form of love is no substitute for justice. Hence Rauschenbusch attacked the philanthropists who gave to charity yet turned their heads from injustice. "Public justice and then private charity, that is the only true order."[31]

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[24] CSC, p. 309 and p. 67.

[25] Ibid. A familiar argument is that love is not only Christian but also prudent: CSC, pp. 315-316, 322.

[26] CSO, pp. 93ff. [27] CSC, p. 67. [28] RK, pp. 181-182.

[29] RK, p. 191. [30] CSO, p. 333.

There was little differentiation between love and justice in Rauschenbusch. Justice was love on a larger scale. Both were based on the social principles of Jesus: "The sacredness of life and personality, the solidarity of the human family, and the obligation of the strong to stand up for all whose life is impaired or whose place within humanity is denied."[32]

The Kingdom of God in Judeo-Christian Tradition

Rauschenbusch argued diligently for the proper place of his understanding of the kingdom of God within the Christian tradition. As a "liberal," he wanted to mediate the truth of the Christian faith to modern man via the process of reinterpretation of his tradition. As an "evangelical" liberal, he wanted to maintain the continuity between his interpretation and the essence of the Christian tradition. His argument is available in most of his works. Here is a brief summary.[33]

The kingdom of God has its Old Testament roots in the reign of God over all human affairs. The law of Moses is an example, but the "beating heart" of this Old Testament faith was the message of the prophets. The "marrow of the gospel"[34] was the kingdom of God. Although this teaching was continuous with the prophetic ideal of the Reign of God, Jesus did modify its meaning: 1) he repudiated the means of force and violence; 2) he broadened the scope of the kingdom to include all people; 3) he repudiated its monarchical form and democratized it; 4) he repudiated its ceremonialism and emphasized ethics; 5) he modified its materialistic bent; 6) he purified it of apocalyptic influences and emphasized that it was both present and future.[35] Rauschenbusch especially appreciated Luke's gospel for its ethical posture. Among the rest of the New Testament canon, the Jewish Christian writings, especially James and Revelation, were praised. These were the closest expressions of the mind of Christ. Paul reflected both impulses of Jesus' revolutionary teaching and, yet, also a social conservatism derived from his belief in the imminence of the Second Coming. The primitive Church as reflected in James and Acts had a burning social ideal of the kingdom, but because of external historical influences and conditions, the Church suffered the "eclipse" of the social ideal. Burning with millenial enthusiasm himself, Rauschenbusch saw the Social Gospel as a second Reformation. Positive historical circumstances and a new sensitivity to the kingdom of God were joined to reform the Church once again in a way never before possible. Early on he said:

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[31] RK, p. 229. See also pp. 191-192.

[32] Walter Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus (New York: Association Press, 1921), p. 190; cited hereafter as SPJ.

[33] CSC, pp. 1-143; RK, pp. 70-116; CSQ, pp. 40-83.

> If the Reformation laid the stress of its preaching on dead works and a living faith, it may be that our age must spurn dead faith and demand live works.[36]

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[34] TSG, p. 131. [35] See CSO, pp. 57-68.

[36] RK, p. 77. See too TSG, p. 131. "The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century was a revival of Pauline theology. The present-day Reformation is a revival of the spirit and aims of Jesus himself" CSO, p. 49.

Much like other liberals of his period, e.g., Harnack's What is Christianity?, Rauschenbusch strained out ceremonial, metaphysical and other historically relative impurities and came out with a simple universalizable circle of truth concerning the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the infinite worth of the human personality. The kingdom of God as the ethical and historical purpose of God was the core of that circle which now for the first time had a chance to make its proper impact on the Christian faith. With this insight in hand and the social crisis as the opportunity, Rauschenbusch saw a unique chance for the Church to unite with God in the establishment of His kingdom.

The Purposes of God's Kingdom in History

The purposes of the kingdom of God were not left in generalities like "love" and "justice" by Rauschenbusch. The purpose of the kingdom was Christianizing the social order: reconstructing it according to the principles of Christ--the law of love. Because Jesus was man as he is created to be, "Christianizing means humanizing in the highest sense."[37] A Christianized order is not a perfect social order. "We shall demand perfection and never expect to get it."[38] To be humanized means to be made to serve human beings rather than exploit them. Rauschenbusch states epigrammatically,

> Theology must become Christocentric; political economy must become anthropocentric. Man is Christianized when he puts God before self; political economy will be Christianized when it puts man before wealth.[39]

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[37] CSO, p. 125. [38] CSO, p. 126. [39] CSC, p. 371.

Rauschenbusch had an organismic view of society.[40] The health of the whole body affected the life of its parts and vice versa. All parts of society acted upon and affected one another. A healing process could be set in motion just as a degenerating process could be. An unchristian social order "makes good men do bad things." A Christian social order "makes bad men do good things."[41] As for the good influence, Rauschenbusch said: "Create a ganglion chain of redeemed personalities in a commonwealth, and all things become possible."[42]

Rauschenbusch could see empirical evidence of the progress of God's reign in history:

> Has it not lifted woman to equality and companionship with man . . . and eliminated unnatural vice, the abandonment of children, blood revenge, and the robbery of the shipwrecked from the customs of Christian nations? Has it not abolished slavery, mitigated war, covered all lands with a network of charities to uplift the poor and the fallen, fostered the institutions of education, aided the progress of civil liberty and social justice, and diffused a softening tenderness throughout human life?[43]

Because of this evidence and the particularly rapid increase of it in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Rauschenbusch's vision betrayed rose-colored lenses. Thus he could declare that "the largest and hardest part of Christianizing the social order has been done."[44] His famous book which defended this thesis, Christianizing the Social Order, was written not only in the wake of a series of social triumphs but also in the wake of a genuinely unexpected widespread public endorsement of his first book, Christianity and the Social Crisis.

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[40] See CSO, pp. 329, 410f. [41] CSO, p. 127.

[42] CSO, p. 462; also p. 465.

[43] CSC, p. 147.

[44] CSO, p. 124.

The thesis of Christianizing the Social Order was that four sections of the social order had been, in varying degrees, "Christianized": 1) the family, the most Christian of the social organizations, had become democratized rather than despotic; 2) the church was now more nearly under the law of love and service; 3) education was now more democratized and oriented to all people; 4) political life, though still corrupt, had become democratized.[45] All four had passed through constitutional changes which made them "to some degree part of the organism through which the spirit of Christ can do its work in humanity."[46]

However, there was much work to be done; for, business was still "the unregenerate section of our social order."[47] In commerce and industry we encounter "the great collective inhumanities."[48] Marks of the inhumanities were:[49] ownership by small minorities; the supremacy of the profit motive; immoral working conditions; the stimulation of covetousness in consumers; the "law of tooth and nail"--"salvation by competition," the "natural theology" of industry;[50] the autocratic power of corporations; and, the profiteering reign of the middleman.

Rauschenbusch's assault upon selfish business was unrelenting. He saw economic inequality as a threat to political equality.[51] He adopted the socialist critique of capitalism without becoming Marxist. The Reign of God used socialism ("He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him"), yet the Reign of God was vaster and higher than socialism.[52]

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[45] CSO, pp. 128ff. [46] CSO, p. 154. [47] CSO, p. 156.

[48] Ibid. [49] CSO, pp. 163-221. [50] CSO, p. 177. [51] CSC, p. 263.

[52] CSO, p. 405; Rauschenbusch is called by his biographer, D. R. Sharpe, a "gradualist socialist" who saw the dangers of a sudden upheaval and a mindless use of force. He shared many of the insights of Marxism while objecting to its atheistic materialism; see D. R.

Rauschenbusch wanted to preserve the benefits of industrialism, using these benefits to "enrich the many instead of the few."[53]

Christianizing the economic realm meant the advocacy of specific goals. Rauschenbusch supported Henry George's "Single Tax" and the socialization of property.[54] No man should monopolize and exploit God's gift of property. We were stewards, not owners, of God's land. He called for the public ownership of utilities and transportation for the same reasons.[55] He advocated the inalienable rights to property and to a job (calling them "means of grace").[56] In short, he advocated "economic democracy"--the rights of people to control of their own livelihood and to political and economic equality and freedom. Demonstrating a fear of totalitarian egalitarianism, however, he said: "We do not want absolute equality; we do want approximate equality."[57]

In conclusion, Rauschenbusch's own words cannot be improved:

> The most comprehensive and intensive act of love in which we could share would be a collective action of the community to change the present organization of the economic life into a new order that would rest on the Christian principles of equal rights, democratic distribution of economic power, the supremacy of the common good, the law of mutual dependence and service, and the uninterrupted flow of good will throughout the human family.[58]

Eschatology and the Kingdom: Transcendence and Immanence

The question of Rauschenbusch's eschatology links in a vital way with the question of transcendence and immanence. This issue is

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Sharpe, Walter Rauschenbusch (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1942), pp. 202ff.

[53] CSC, p. 345.

[54] CSO, p. 419.

[55] CSO, p. 423; CSC, p. 386.

[56] CSO, p. 341.

[57] CSO, p. 405.

[58] CSO, p. 323.

probably the one most critically and superficially dealt with by Rauschenbusch's critics. While his eschatology is one of the places where Rauschenbusch's theology most transparently reflects its times, it also reveals more careful theological thinking than is generally assumed.

Rauschenbusch's eschatology reflects the scholarly consensus of liberal historical-critical methodology, especially of liberal theologians like Ritschl and Harnack. Apocalyptic elements of New Testament eschatology were chaff to be cast to the wind. Individualized, spiritualized, totally futurized, and asceticized eschatologies were deemed inferior to the mind of Christ. Rauschenbusch favored an eschatology made up of the following characteristics.[59] 1) An emphasis on the future development of the race. As shown above, Rauschenbusch saw an empirical progress of the kingdom:

> A progressive kingdom of righteousness happens all the time in installments, like our own sanctification. Our race will come to an end in due time . . . . Meanwhile we are on the march toward the kingdom of God, and getting our reward by every fractional realization of it which makes us hungry for more.[60]

2) The consciousness of God working in history. His theological perspective was anti-metaphysical and primarily oriented toward God's being in history. 3) A restoration of the millenial ideal of social life under the law of Christ. Rauschenbusch greatly admired the social character of the millenial ideal, e.g., in Revelation. 4) A developmental, not catastrophic, view of the kingdom of God. He stressed the immanence of God and the presence of Christ's spirit in history. In

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[59] See TSG, Chapter XVIII, pp. 208-239.

[60] TSG, p. 227.

his later writings, Rauschenbusch rejected the Schwietzer-Weiss school which emphasized a catastrophic and apocalyptic view and which called Jesus' ethic an "interim ethic." He accused this school of being ideologically predisposed to be bourgeois and anti-revolutionary (in the Christian sense).[61] 5) The utilization of all constructive and educational forces. No talent of man was to be overlooked for service in the kingdom. 6) The vision of victory not through peaceful development but through battle and conflict with the kingdom of Evil. From the beginning Rauschenbusch insisted that the world would not evolve into the kingdom of God "by natural processes."[62] It represented an uphill battle against the "natural downward drift of humanity." In 1907 he stated that there was no perfection in this life--only growth toward perfection: "At best there is always but an approximation to a perfect social order. The kingdom of God is always but coming."[63] In 1912 he said,

> We might expect considerations of justice and mercy to thaw through the icy indifference of class selfishness. But moral suasion is strangely feeble where the sources of a man's income are concerned.[64]

Later, at the start of World War I, he would remark about the kingdom of God: "It suffers terrible reverses; we are in the midst of one now . . . ."[65] It is fair to say that Rauschenbusch realized more and more, particularly during the First World War, that the progress of the kingdom of God would be through conflict.

> Human nature is frail; men of evil will are powerful; organized evil is in practical control. Consequently social regeneration involves not only growth but conflict.[66]

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[61] TSG, p. 158.

[62] See his early RK, p. 283.

[63] CSC, pp. 420-421.

[64] CSO, p. 31; emphasis mine.

[65] SPJ, p. 197.

[66] SPJ, p. 193.

This brief summary demonstrates how Rauschenbusch related the immanence and the transcendence of God's kingdom. God's power is immanent in that he is at work within the human spirit and the historical process to push it toward fulfillment. The kingdom of God is in all institutions realizing itself through them.[67] Within this kind of faith, one had to be optimistic. Pessimism was evidence of unfaith.

> If anyone thinks it [social reconstruction] cannot be done, let the unbeliever stand aside and give place to those who have faith. This thing is destiny. God wills it. What is morally necessary, must be possible. Else where is God?[68]

However, Rauschenbusch does not collapse the transcendence of God into His historical immanence. Perfection is not possible in the historical order. The kingdom is not to be identified with a social movement or institution. The kingdom is "always but coming." The conflict of God's kingdom with the kingdom of Evil illustrates the transcendence and not-yet-ness of God's kingdom.

THE KINGDOM OF EVIL

Rauschenbusch's treatment of the kingdom of Evil is immediately relevant today. No one can accuse him of näive optimism and read what he has to say in this regard. The kingdom of Evil is made up of the super-personal forces of evil called sometimes by Rauschenbusch, the "principalities and powers." The kingdom of evil concerns both the doctrine of sin and also the super-personal forces of evil.

Sin and the Kingdom of Evil

Correcting what he saw as an under-emphasis in the Social Gospel movement, Rauschenbusch began his Theology for the Social Gospel with the doctrine of sin. He wanted to avoid a doctrinalization of sin and Satan which rendered them impractical to every day life. "It is possible," he said, "to hold the orthodox doctrine on the devil and not recognize him when we meet him in a real estate office or at the stock market."[69] He defines sin essentially as selfishness.[70] The sinful mind "then is the unsocial and anti-social mind."[71] The universality of sin consists of: 1) the evil heart of man; 2) the social stumbling blocks of temptation; and 3) the power of the kingdom of Evil.[72]

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[67] TSG, p. 145.

[68] CSO, p. 331.

Leading from his solidaristic view of man and his organismic view of society, Rauschenbusch contends for the social transmission of sin. Sin is transmitted by social tradition, for example, alcoholism, lynching, blood feuds, and militarism.[73] "Sin is lodged in unsocial custom and institutions and is absorbed by the individual from his social group . . . ."[74]

Because of the universality and social transmission of sin, the progress of the kingdom of God is a "Conquest by Conflict."[75]

> The advance of the kingdom of God is not simply a process of social education, but a conflict with hostile forces which resist, neutralize, and defy whatever works toward the true social order.[76]

Some of the "recalcitrant forces" are the desire for power, the love of property, and unsocial religion.[77] Rauschenbusch's view of sin reaches beyond an individual's selfishness and beyond simple cause and effect between individual and society:

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[69] TSG, p. 35.
[70] TSG, p. 47.
[71] TSG, p. 50.
[72] TSG, p. 40.
[73] TSG, pp. 60, 64.
[74] TSG, p. 60.
[75] SPJ, p. 151.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

> Here we encounter the devil. There is more in sin than our own frailty and stupidity, and the bad influence of other individuals. There is a permanent force of organized evil.[78]

The Kingdom of Evil: Corporate Social Structures

Rauschenbusch derives his thought of the kingdom of Evil from scripture and tradition. He notes the Old Testament belief in evil spirits, the post-exilic development of a good/evil dualism, the New Testament belief in the kingdom of Satan, and the subsequent doctrine of a kingdom of demons in church tradition. Rauschenbusch wants to "demythologize" these realities into the concept of a kingdom of Evil comprised of historical and social realities of sin. He develops a "solidaristic and organic conception of the power and reality of evil in the world."[79]

This realm of evil is controlled by the permanent force of organized evil. It is peopled by the "super-personal forces of evil." Drawing on Josiah Royce's "being we call communities" and Wundt's _Völkerpsychologie_,[80] Rauschenbusch vividly describes the corporate personalities that fight the advances of God's kingdom. These powers, based on an evil purpose or controlled by a group interest hostile to the common good, "are to us what demonic personalities were to earlier Christian minds."[81]

These evil collective forces usually have "fallen from a better estate"; selfish interests have changed them from a role of service to one of exploitation.[82] The continuity of life in an organization carries on the goals once set up by men. An exploitative purpose fashions its structures to carry on beyond the persons originally in charge. It is a super-personal force.

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[78] _SPJ_, p. 155.

[79] _TSG_, p. 87; pp. 81-87.

[80] _TSG_, pp. 70f.

[81] _TSG_, p. 110.

Rauschenbusch hoped that the interpretation of these super-personal forces as demonic powers would change the defensive position of the Church in relationship to them into an offensive posture. We must seek to combat the kingdom of Evil, not merely hold it at bay.[83]

Never one to leave his theology in generalities, Rauschenbusch could get most explicit about the demonic capacities of these super-personal forces. All human organizations develop a collective egotism, a collective hunger and self-assertion.[84] The corporation is a prime example:

> It is not tempted by wine, woman, or song like the rest of us, but its whole life is ruled and directed by one desire and passion which is never quenched nor satisfied, the lust for profits . . . .[85]

Neither does a corporation's constituency necessarily make a difference.

> A corporation might be composed of retired missionaries, peace advocates, and dear old ladies, but their philanthropy would cause no vibrations in the business end of the concern.[86]

Business men, he said, are "the masters of business but the servants of Profit."[87] Capitalism hordes its enormous profits for a scandalous few. Owners and managers have autocratic power. Capitalism has a spirit of its own antagonistic to the spirit of Christianity.[88]

Elsewhere, almost everywhere, Rauschenbusch attacks mammonism and materialism.[89] Wealth, like manure, needs to be spread around.[90] The lust for money exerts an evil spiritual control. Class interest controls people's minds and hearts. Militarism casts its own spell over people.[91] Later in life he was heartbroken over the enormity of war's demonic power over people. War and nationalism created a spiritual psychosis in nations.[92] All of the social unregenerate forces "cast a spell" over people's moral judgment that makes kingdom work impossible.[93]

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[82] TSG, p. 72; also see CSO, p. 78.

[83] TSG, pp. 87ff.

[84] CSO, p. 78.

[85] CSO, p. 184.

[86] CSO, p. 185.

[87] CSO, p. 222.

[88] CSO, pp. 311ff.

The battle with the super-personal powers of evil has as its purpose the salvation or Christianization of these powers. Their salvation consists in coming out from under the spell of the kingdom of Evil and "coming under the law of Christ." The law of Christ, as seen above, operates under the "cooperative principle" which brings the powers back to their loving and serving purpose.[94]

The Role of the Church: The Battle with the Kingdom of Evil

The church in Rauschenbusch's thought is the super-personal force of good. It is "the permanent social factor in salvation."[95] The church is "at the same time a realization of the kingdom within its own limits and the instrument of its propagation."[96] The kingdom of God uses more institutions than just the church, but the church has been and will be the permanent instrument of the kingdom. The church embodies the spirit of Christ and brings it into the social realm. Rauschenbusch wished to counteract the individualism of Protestantism with this corporate solidaristic doctrine of the church. Being a Baptist and descendent of the radical reformation, Rauschenbusch made it very clear that the church does not "own" this power of God, rather, its power rests on the presence of the kingdom of God within her.[97]

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[89] CSC, pp. 369ff.

[90] CSC, p. 281.

[91] CSC, p. 350.

[92] Sharpe, op. al., pp. 380f.

[93] CSC, p. 350.

[94] TSG, pp. 111-117.

[95] TSG, pp. 118ff.; SPJ, p. 164.

[96] RK, p. 152.

The church's mission in combat with the kingdom of Evil consists in more than realizing Christ's spirit and more than joining hands with other groups in reconstructing society. It also has the goal of converting individuals. Rauschenbusch never emphasized social regeneration to the neglect of personal conversion. Every conversion contributed to the kingdom of God.[98]

A correlate purpose was the lifting of people's moral vision--the stimulation of the moral energy God gave every person. Rauschenbusch saw the only hope for the world in the summoning of the "moral force."[99] Religion is the moral force. It can do what education and politics cannot.[100] God is that inward religious and moral force that moves us to higher personhood and more caring community. The role of the church is to tap this religious force.

A final word is necessary about the methods of the battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Evil. Rauschenbusch emphasized the moral force of the kingdom. He argued against the use of violence and physical force in the battle. Many times he said that evil could not be overcome with evil, that the medicine of violence is worse than the sickness.[101] The moral force he thought minimized the need for physical force. But he was enough of a realist to know that if the moral force did not regenerate society, a revolution may by necessity do it.[102] He could not condemn the use of force against oppression in every case. He saw through the ruling classes' advocacy of non-violence: "The game of organized violence is the game they can play best."[103] Therefore, Rauschenbusch was not an absolute pacifist, even though he moved closer to the pacifist position during the first World War.[104] His faith remained strong during the latter years in the belief that the kingdom of God would prevail even though the forces of evil seemed to be gaining strength. This was so because, contrary to popular understanding, Rauschenbusch's faith was not in the moral power of man but in the kingdom of _God_. While the setbacks to the advance of the kingdom saddened him, every small step of progress was a sign of God's presence which kept him going.

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[97] TSG, p. 129.

[98] CSC, p. 351.

[99] CSC, p. 285.

[100] RK, p. 284.

[101] RK, p. 194; CSO, p. 191.

Conclusions.

In summary, Rauschenbusch's thought looks like this:

1. The kingdom of God is the Reign of God whose purpose is the reconstruction of society according to the law of love.

2. The kingdom of Evil is that permanent force of evil controlling the super-personal forces of evil: institutions, groups, and ideals, etc. These forces transmit sin to other parts of society and to individuals.

3. The role of che Church is to be an instrument for the salvation

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[102] _CSO_, p. 334.

[103] _CSO_, p. 408. He advocated the use of political power in the class struggle, noting that the class war is "not likely to be fought out in love and tenderness" _CSO_, pp. 410-411.

[104] Sharpe, op. cit., pp. 356-392.

or Christianization of these powers. Christianization consists in their humanization or democratization: being fashioned in service to human beings.

4. Through the power of his kingdom, God is making progress in history, though this progress is not inevitable, or irreversible, or without conflict.

5. The battle waged by the kingdom of God against the kingdom of Evil is waged primarily by tapping the moral force in every person, and thereby reconstructing the super-personal forces. Ideally the change is done through non-violent means such as education and reform. But occasionally violence is a tragic necessity, one precipitated by the sinfulness of man.

We can see how Rauschenbusch's theology works within the four theological motifs outlined above.

1) Eschatology and Ethics. The kingdom of God is marching toward victory within history. The eschatological battle is being waged between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Evil. The church as the super-personal force for good battles under God's power with the super-personal forces for evil, the "principalities and powers." Rauschenbusch emphasized the progressive evolutionary defeat of the "powers," but he had no mechanistic view of the victory. The battle was no easy one and progress was not automatic. Rauschenbusch's eschatology would be most congenial to Paul's "progressive" image of the battle in I Corinthians 15, as it was to Jesus' "growth" parables. In terms of the "moral" nature of the battle, Ephesians 6:10-20 fits well with Rauschenbusch's vision, though he would advocate a more offensive and less defensive posture.

A criticism of Rauschenbusch's eschatology is most pertinent as it concerns his evolutionary or "growth" model for Christ's winning battle with the "powers." His organismic view of society led him to picture the victory of love over evil, of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of Evil, and of Christ over the "powers" in terms of a domino effect, a gradual healing process, a holy osmosis, or the creation of a ganglion chain of redeemed personalities.[105] While he did recognize the "not yet" of the kingdom of God and the gross injustices of the present age, the "already" of the kingdom was the more dominant tone, especially as represented in Christianizing the Social Order.[106] But while he can be criticized at this point, he was much less a child of his optimistic age and more "realistic" about the power of evil than is generally recognized.

2) Christ as Lord of the Powers. Rauschenbusch insisted that the "powers" could be Christianized. They could be changed to live by Christ's law of love. Christ's battle was to win Lordship over the powers. He was their inward meaning, and his moral force was to be found as an untapped well in every person. Here we find his view of Christ's Lordship congenial to Paul's view in Eph. 1 and Col. 1 of the Christological foundation of, and authority over, the "powers."

3) The Powers as Fallen. Rauschenbusch's work is an empirical examination of the fallenness of the "powers." It still has great power and accuracy.

4) The Powers as Demonic. Rauschenbusch makes a difference of degree rather than kind between the fallenness of the "powers" and their

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[105] CSO, p. 462. [106] See references and footnotes 44 and 45.

demonic capacities. Evil is the permanent, intense form of the sin which is selfishness. The "more" of evil is its continued presence in social structures and institutions. The demonic is described most often as the exploitation and dehumanization of persons by other persons and/or institutions. The "devil" is identified in the real estate office and corporation board room.

In conclusion, Rauschenbusch's theology brings deep meaning and moral passion to the problem of Christ and the "powers." His position is an important and enduring one. Christ is at work in the kingdom of God to transform the "powers." The church is the permanent arm of God's kingdom in the battle to Christianize the "powers."

The most pertinent critique that can be made concerning Rauschenbusch's theology of Christ and the "powers" concerns his idealism. It is not true that Rauschenbusch, at his liberal best, underestimated the power of sin and thereby the tenacity of evil in the "powers." It is closer to the truth to say that he overestimated the efficacy of love or the "moral force" to tame the heart of the "powers."

Rauschenbusch's position, "Christ Transforming the Powers," is a powerful and enduring model for Christians. His weaknesses concern his perceptions about the ease of the victory within history. However, his optimism was never as näive as his critics later held. His was an optimism nurtured by his faith in the power of God and harnessed by his acknowledgement of the stubbornness of sin. Soon after his death, another prophet would rise within the tradition of American social Christianity to correct some of the weaknesses of the Social Gospel and forge a new solution to the problem of Christ and the "powers."

Chapter 3

THE CHRISTIAN REALISM OF REINHOLD NIEBUHR: CHRIST TRANSCENDENT AND RELEVANT TO THE "POWERS"

In the last chapter we presented Walter Rauschenbusch's position on Christ and the "powers"--Christ transforming the "powers." It was a hallmark of Social Gospel theology and evangelical liberalism. In this chapter I shall study the unique position offered by Reinhold Niebuhr. It may be termed a dialectical theology of Christ and the "powers." Another way of stating the position is: Christ transcendent and relevant to the "powers."

Between Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr a striking change was taking place in American life and thought. By the time Rauschenbusch died in 1918, the Social Gospel Movement had reached its peak. In the Federal Council of Churches the Social Gospel found institutional expression. The "Social Creed" of the Church was adopted by the Methodist Church, and in modified forms, by the Federal Council of Churches and other denominations. All major denominations founded social ministry commissions.[1] In 1920, denominational weeklies still "were filled with articulate and vigorous social criticism."[2]

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[1] See Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 280-317; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 802-804.

[2] Paul A. Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel (Archon Books, 1971), p. 19.

The period of the 1920's and '30's, however, saw the decline of the Social Gospel and theological liberalism in America. Robert Handy has aptly called 1925-1935 "the American religious depression."[3] In his insightful essay, Handy maintains that while the economic and religious depressions were intimately related, they were also distinguishable. Marks of the religious depression were legion. There was serious decline in missionary enthusiasm, falling church attendance and a lowering of the minister's status. Reinhold Niebuhr, who was a major force in the transition period, perceived that in this period "a psychology of defeat of which both fundamentalism and modernism are symptoms, has gripped the forces of religion."[4] This is a striking change of mood from Rauschenbusch's hymnic words of hope in the great forces of religion.

There was general post-war disillusionment. Guilt over unquestioned support of World War I, despair over tarnished idealism and shock over the ugliness of this "war to end all wars" combined to destroy the confidence of the preceding era.[5]

The rising tide of secularism, no longer stemmed by the strength of the "Protestant Era," now surged across America.[6] Public opinion was turning an unfavorable eye upon traditional Christianity.[7] Instead of Charles Sheldon's Social Gospel novels with their romantic view of the clergy and optimistic view of religion, Sinclair Lewis' novels emerged portraying the con-man evangelist, Elmer Gantry, and churches which reflected the values of Main Street more than the kingdom of God.

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[3] Robert T. Handy, "The American Religious Depression, 1925-1935," Church History, 29 (March, 1960), pp. 3-16 (hereafter designated ARD).

[4] Reinhold Niebuhr, Does Civilization Need Religion? (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 2.

[5] ARD, pp. 3-16; Carter, pp. 85-108.

[6] Carter, pp. 85-96.

[7] ARD, p. 7.

The spiritual depression and the economic depression combined to hasten the decline of Protestantism. As the already weakened churches were hit by the Great Depression, membership dropped, budgets were cut, ministers were fired and chapels closed. Protestantism entered this period as the dominant American religion, one closely identified with its culture. But as Handy reports, it emerged from the depression no longer in that position: "The Protestant era in America was brought to a close."[8]

All the above reflected the "precipitous decline of the evangelical liberal theology."[9] In his famous article, "After Liberalism - What?" John C. Bennett spoke of the disintegration of liberalism, of the loss of surety and of the feeling of "theological homelessness."[10] The dominant theological structure of its time had begun to crumble. However, the Social Gospel endured the destruction of its predominant theological underpinnings. Neo-orthodox theology replaced liberalism as the dominant theological structure in America, but it retained the social gospel impulse. Sydney Alhstrom has ably summarized the characteristics of neo-orthodoxy in America: 1) doctrinal diversity; 2) an attack on the assumptions of liberalism (optimism and progress) as a tragic sense of life was now being apprehended; 3) a sense of urgency and a demand for moral and intellectual humility; 4) a dialectical mood--paradox and the contradictions of history were emphasized; 5) an effort to avoid cynicism and nihilism, with a hopeful mood of an eschatological nature; 6) a deep respect for scientific, scholarly and artistic achievements of men; 7) a revival of the doctrine of the church and of Biblical Theology; and, 8) a "reshaped social gospel."[11]

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[8] ARD, pp. 12-14.

[9] ARD, p. 10.

[10] The Christian Century, 50 (Nov. 8, 1933), p. 1403.

Although American neo-orthodox theology is indebted to the European neo-orthodox theology (variously called the theology of crisis, or dialectical theology or neo-reformation theology) of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich, it also has its distinctiveness. No person more adequately represents neo-orthodoxy in America than Reinhold Niebuhr. No one exhibits more the American distinctivenesses. No one more fiercely carries on the "reshaped social gospel" which it learned in its liberal infancy and carried on into its mature adulthood.

THE CHRISTIAN REALISM OF REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian Realism is a happy marriage of neo-orthodox theology and the rich American tradition of social Christianity. Not only has Niebuhr the theologian led a generation of American theologians, but Niebuhr the political philosopher has influenced a generation of politicians. As Hubert Humphrey said of Niebuhr's influence from the 1920's to today,

> . . . ever since that time Reinhold Niebuhr has been taming the cynics and pulling utopians back to earth. No preacher or teacher, at least in my time, has had a greater impact on the secular world. No American has made a greater contribution to political wisdom and moral responsibility.[12]

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[11] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, pp. 944-948.

[12] Hubert H. Humphrey, "A Tribute to Reinhold Niebuhr," Christianity and Crisis, 26 (May 30, 1966), p. 120.

Reinhold Niebuhr was born in the summer of 1892 in an Evangelical Synod pastor's home in the mid-west, Wright City, Missouri. His German-Lutheran roots were to become an important influence on his theology. His early training was in the evangelical liberal tradition at Yale Divinity School. And yet, his most formative early years were, like Rauschenbusch, spent in a city parish, a small Detroit parish. His struggles with the economic and social dilemma, particularly those related to the Ford Motor Company, became a determinative force in his development. He saw the hypocrisy in the "good" men who ran "good" institutions. He sensed the irrelevance of moral idealism to the power realities in the modern world.[13]

In one sense Reinhold Niebuhr was a child of his liberal age: he never stopped his critique of liberalism but he never let go of his liberalism for a conservative political or theological conservatism. Ronald Stone has traced Niebuhr's life according to the scheme of his ongoing relationship with liberalism. 1) His early liberalism; 2) his refutation of liberalism through historical events; 3) his Marxist critique of liberalism; 4) the theological attack on liberalism; and 5) his return to political liberalism--not like Wilson's idealistic liberalism, but more like Franklin D. Roosevelt's pragmatic liberalism.[14]

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[13] Reinhold Niebuhr, "Intellectual Biography" in Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, eds. Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1961), pp. 3-23; for other biographical data see also Ronald H. Stone, Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet to Politicians (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 17-35; and June Bingham, Courage to Change (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), pp. 49-137.

[14] Ronald H. Stone, Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet to Politicians (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 131; this scheme forms the outline of Stone's book.

Niebuhr's Christian Realism is a distinctive contribution to theological and political thought. His is an important statement in the problem of the relationship between Christ and the "powers," one that, in Humphrey's words, attempts the dialectical task of "taming the cynics and pulling utopians back to earth."

Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian Realism expresses itself dialectically because he perceives the relationship between Christ and the "powers," between God and man, and between the kingdom of God and history, dialectically. Succinctly stated, the kingdom of God is both transcendent and relevant. The Christian law of love is the "impossible possibility." Working out of a Reformation tradition which related Christ and Culture dualistically, Reinhold Niebuhr modified this dualism by emphasizing the dialectical relationship of Christ to culture. To be sure Christ and his kingdom are always transcendent from the world, but there is also an organic relationship between the two which keeps the two realms in relation to and in tension with one another. In our typology Niebuhr's Christian Realism may be termed: Christ transcendent and relevant to the "powers."

A Dialectical Christology

Christ stands at the center of Reinhold Niebuhr's dialectical theology. Although his Christology is not systematic, it is the "principal passion and purpose of his theological work."[15] Christ stands centrally in Niebuhr's theology because Christ discloses the sovereignty of God over history and the perfect norm of human nature; that is, he is the "Son of God" and the "second Adam."[16] Christ stands for more than the life of the historical Jesus. Christ stands for the relationship of God to humankind and of the kingdom of God to history. The significance and meaning of Christ is paramount in Niebuhr's theology. Christ's meaning is expressed dialectically, that is, Christ stands for the transcendence and immanence of God. He stands for the possibilities and limitations of human life and history. Christ's dialectical character is best illustrated by his sacrificial love, agape, which stands in judgment over and in organic connection with "mutual love." Christ's agape-ethic, exemplified in the Sermon on the Mount, is, in a key Niebuhrian phrase, the "impossible possibility." His love is transcendent and relevant to our world and its highest form of love, "mutual love." Jesus Christ in his life, death, and eternal significance reveals the dialectical relationship of God with human life. The truth of Jesus Christ represents the truth of all reality, grounded as it is in the sovereign God. Niebuhr speaks:

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[15] Paul Lehmann, "The Christology of Reinhold Niebuhr," in Kegley and Bretall, op. cit., p. 253.

[16] Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, II (New York:

> In Christian theology, at its best, the revelation of Christ, the God-man, is a revelation of the paradoxical relation of the eternal to history, which it is the genius of mythical-prophetic religion to emphasize. Christ is thus the revelation of the very impossible possibility which the Sermon on the Mount elaborates in ethical terms. If Christian orthodoxy sometimes tends to resolve this paradox by the picture of a Christ who has been stripped of all qualities which relate him to man and history, Christian liberalism resolves it by reducing Christ to a figure of heroic love who reveals the full possibilities of human nature to us. In either case the total human situation which the mythos of the Christ and the Cross illumines, is obscured. Modern liberalism significantly substitutes the name of "Jesus" for that of "Christ" in most of the sentimental and moralistic exhortations by which it encourages men to "follow in his steps" . . . . his historic life is related to the transcendent Christ as a final and ultimate symbol of a relation which prophetic religion sees between all life and history and the transcendent. In genuine prophetic Christianity the moral qualities of the Christ are not only our hope, but our despair. Out of that despair arises a

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Charles Scribner's Son, 1964 [c. 1941]), p. 68; hereafter designated NDM.

> new hope centered in the revelation of God in Christ. In such faith Christ and the Cross reveal not only the possibilities but the limits of human finitude in order that a more ultimate hope may arise from the contrite recognition of those limits.[17]

A Dialectical Theology

Early in his career Niebuhr worked out his dialectical form of theology. In An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (1935), he criticized the errors of liberalism and Christian orthodoxy. Liberalism captive to the "culture of modernity" too easily affirmed the relevance of the Christian love ethic to culture. "Its kingdom of God was translated to mean exactly that ideal society which modern culture hoped to realize through the evolutionary process."[18] Orthodoxy, on the other hand, dismissed the law of love from the realm of society, and thereby "hid" the Christian ethic in transcendence. Niebuhr countered both by relating the transcendent and historic dimensions of the Christian ethic dialectically. The transcendent must be the judge of all human achievements but at the same time remain in organic connection with history. The quality of the tension between the transcendent and history is measured by these two criteria:

> . . . The degree to which the transcendent truly transcends every value and achievement of history, so that no relative value of historical achievement may become the basis of moral compacency; and the degree to which the transcendent remains in organic contact with the historical, so that no degree of tension may rob the historical of its significance.[19]

For Niebuhr true prophetic faith affirms the temporal without capitulating to its relativities and points to the transcendent without leaving the world.[20]

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[17] Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York: Meridian Books, 1956) [c. 1935]), pp. 111-112; hereafter designated ICE.

[18] ICE, p. 15.

[19] ICE, p. 18.

Niebuhr sets the greatest possible tension between the sacrificial *agape* ethic of Jesus and prudential social ethics, but even in doing this he maintains an organic connection between the two. The double task of the Christian in the realm of social life is therefore: 1) "to reduce the anarchy of the world to some kind of immediately sufferable order and unity,' and 2) "to set these tentative and insecure unities and achievements under the criticism of the ultimate ideal."[21]

His perspective avoids both "the Scylla of a too optimistic pantheism and the Charybdis of a too pessimistic and otherworldly dualism." Liberalism was the former error and orthodoxy was the latter. The relationship of love and justice reflects these two errors. Liberalism tended to equate love and justice. Justice was merely love on a large scale. The problem of orthodoxy was its separation of love and justice. In orthodoxy, the sinfulness of the world "was used as an excuse for the complacent acceptance of whatever imperfet (sic) justice a given social order had established."[22] Since love and justice were separated the principle of order rather than the ideal of love determined the concept of justice.[23] Brunner represents for Niebuhr the orthodox (and neo-orthodox) separation of love from the social realm (e.g., as in "orders" theology). A pessimism about man and the extreme fear of chaos lead Brunner to statements like this:

> The Christian must submit himself to a social order--which is in itself loveless. He must do this if he is not to evade the most urgent of all demands of the love commandment, the demand to protect the dyke which saves human life from chaos.[24]

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[20] ICE, p. 129. [21] ICE, p. 62. [22] ICE, p. 129. [23] ICE, p. 131.

[24] ICE, p. 114; cited from Brunner's Das Gebot und die Ordnungen, pp. 208-214.

Niebuhr sought to balance the errors of liberalism and orthodoxy with an understanding wherein,

> . . . the law of love is involved in all approximations of justice not only as the source of the norms of justice, but as an ultimate perspective by which their limitations are discovered.[25]

An illustration is his use of the ideal of equality as the regulative principle of justice (its relevance), but as a goal never to be realized (its transcendence).[26]

As Niebuhr applies his dialectic to the social realm, he defines justice as a balance of power to control the egoistic passion of individuals and groups.[27] Collectives reveal human sin and finitude "with particular force."[28] He asserts that "the full evil of human finitude and sin is most vividly revealed in conflicts between national communities."[29] When religious motifs are introduced into national conflicts (e.g., Jews and Arabs) we have "the final and most demonic pretension."[30]

It was Niebuhr's work of 1932, Moral Man and Immoral Society,[31] which rocked American liberal theology and politics. It was to America what Karl Barth's Römerbrief was to Europe. His thesis was that contrary to liberal thought, there is a basic difference between individual morality and collective morality, an insight which he hoped would lead to a more realistic program of social change and not to moral cynicism. Collectives have less capacity for self-transcendence, for a rational sense of justice, and for the moral impulse of sympathy than do individuals. The polemic of the book is against the sentimental moralisms, both religious and secular, which overestimate the power of reason and moral suasion and underestimate the necessity of power in social arrangements.

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[25] ICE, p. 128. [26] ICE, p. 101. [27] ICE, p. 128.

[28] ICE, p. 115. [29] ICE, p. 116. [30] ICE, p. 117.

[31] Moral Man and Immoral Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960 [c. 1932]); hereafter designated MMIS.

Niebuhr probes the profound dilemma of social life: that self-interest corrupts every form of social organization, even democracy, so that coercion is an unavoidable part of life. Balance of power, therefore, is as much a part of justice as ethical vision. Politics will always be the arena where conscience and power meet to work out their "tentative and uneasy compromises."[32] Drawing out the distinction between an individual agape ethic and a social prudential ethic to an almost unbearable tension, Niebuhr then defined social ethics as an ethics of compromise. Its realism acknowledged the brutal self-interest and collective egoism of historical existence.

His exposition of immoral society was painfully delineated in the book. He probingly described the selfishness and self-deception of nations.[33] Our "altruism" and "ideals" as nations are always hypocritical in that they disguise the priority of self-interest. Class privilege also carefully justifies itself ideologically and hypocritically.[34] In this book Niebuhr was probably more involved and impressed with Marxist thought than at any other time of his career. He applauded Marxist realism about the nature of power in society even as he decried its moral cynicism.[35]

This important work dialectically relates realism and moral values, and thereby helps us escape either a too consistent and cynical realism or a too sentimental and hypocritical moralism. Niebuhr's own words speak best. "Society [as distinct from the individual] . . . makes justice rather than unselfishness its highest moral idea."[36] But,

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[32] MMIS, p. 4; emphasis mine.

[33] MMIS, Chapter four.

[34] MMIS, Chapter five.

[35] MMIS, Chapter six.

> Any justice which is only justice soon degenerates into something less than justice. It must be saved by something which is more than justice.[37]

And that more is Christ's law of love which is both transcendent and relevant.

The "Powers" in Niebuhr's Thought

According to Niebuhr, collective realities have identities and potencies which are distinct from, as well as organically related to, individual life. Glancing back from 1965 Neibuhr said he would re-state the thesis of Moral Man . . . in this way: "that collective self-regard of class, race, and nation is more stubborn and persistent than the egoism of individuals."[38] Education or benevolence are not enough to transform society, as liberal idealists in his day had thought.[39] The distinction between individual and group morality was one of degree instead of kind. A better title of his famous work might have been, said Niebuhr retrospectively, "The Not So Moral Man in His Less Moral Communities."[40] Society "culminates" the egoism of individuals so that the group egoism "has a double force."[41] His resulting realism emphasizes the need for the balance of power to modify the contest of powers between groups.

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[36] MMIS, p. 258. [37] Ibid.

[38] Reinhold Niebuhr, Man's Nature and His Communities (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 22; hereafter designated MNHC.

[39] Ibid.

[40] MNHC, p. 22.

[41] The Christian Century, 50 (March 15, 1933), p. 363.

Collective sin has an evil potency beyond that of individuals,

> . . . because group pride . . . actually achieves a certain authority over the individual and results in unconditioned demands by the group upon the individual.[42]

As the group develops "organs of will," e.g., the state, it seems "to have become an independent centre of moral life." The individual is thereby inclined to bow before its pretensions and authority even when these go against his moral values.[43]

Niebuhr also observed the spiritual character of group power exemplified by the nation. National pride and ambition have spiritual expressions: lust for power, pride, contempt for the other, hypocrisy (pretension to higher values than self-interest), and the claim of moral autonomy.[44] The unconditional claim of nations has two aspects: 1) it claims more absolute devotion to values which transcend its life than is actually the case; and 2) it regards its values as more absolute than they really are.[45] An example of this hypocritical pretension is that we may fight for "liberty" or "democracy" but not until our vital interests are threatened.[46]

The unconditioned character of the claim of a particular group makes it a demonic power. Here Niebuhr is most similar to Tillich's definition of the demonic. In an essay entitled, "Do the State and Nation Belong to God or the Devil?,"[47] Niebuhr emphasized the ambiguity of good and evil in the state and nation, but he made it clear when they become demonic:

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[42] NDM, I, p. 208. [43] NDM, I, p. 208. [44] NDM, I, p. 211.

[45] NDM, I, pp. 211ff. [46] NDM, I, p. 213.

[47] Do the State and Nation Belong to God or the Devil? (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1937).

> Its very claim to unqualified moral worth is the basis of its demonic character. In other words, it belongs to the devil precisely because it claims to be God.[48]

The gods of natural religion called demons by the prophets are likened by Niebuhr to the collective self which defies the limits of human finitude. These "must be regarded as demons."[49] The ambiguity of this claim is in the fact that the nation could not make such claims unless it bore genuine values. Even more ambiguous ethically than the nation is the state; for, "the state is a particular ruling class which claims the unconditioned loyalty which only the total community deserves."[50] Here, then, is a definition of social evil that does not depend upon a theistic reference: an oligarchy assumes power and authority due only to all of the people.

Communism and Nazism were case studies in Niebuhr's theology of the "powers." Communism was an organized evil "immune to every form of moral and political suasion." Its characteristics were: the monopoly of power in which absolute power causes evils worse than simple injustice; the moral pretension which arises from utopian illusions; and a dogmatism coupled with the pretensions of scientific rationality. All of these joined with the ideological pretensions of Communism to give a spiritual dimension to its evil.[51] Niebuhr also described the evil of the "demonic fury of facist politics in which a collective will expresses boundless ambitions and imperial desires."[52] Nazism,

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[48] Ibid., p. 11. [49] Ibid., pp. 31-32. [50] Ibid., p. 15.

[51] Christian Realism and Political Problems (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 34-42; hereafter designated CR.

> . . . sought to re-establish a primitive unity in the community . . . . The children of darkness in this case set the false universal of the national community against all other particular expressions of vitality.[53]

As we have been seeing, however, Niebuhr does not demonize the powers _per se_, but instead closely observes their ethical ambiguity. This allows him to make discriminating judgments concerning different "powers," something he did not think possible, for example, in Barth's form of neo-orthodoxy. On the one hand, groups are more arrogant, hypocritical, self-centered, and ruthless than individuals.[54] And the state is particularly vulnerable to demonic pretension because of its size and majesty and use of national symbols. Indeed Niebuhr said, "Sinful pride and idolatrous pretension are thus an inevitable concomitant of the cohesion of large political groups."[55] On the other hand, these groups offer real values to the person as well. There is "life as well as death, virtue as well as sin in these social and political configurations."[56] The same power which is required to establish order and unity is also the basis of injustice "because it seeks its own ends, rather than the common weal."[57] Throughout his life Niebuhr played variations on the theme of the ambiguity of power.

> The knowledge . . . that every _civitas_ _terrana_ is a city of destruction does not, however, negate the permanent values which

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[52] _The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), p. 23; hereafter designated _CLCD_.

[53] _CLCD_, pp. 123-124. [54] _NDM_, I, p. 208. [55] _NDM_, I, pp. 208-210.

[56] _Faith and History_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), p. 221; hereafter designated _FH_.

[57] _FH_, p. 221.

> appear in the rise and fall of civilizations and cultures . . . . Thus the same civilizations which perish because they violate the law of love at some point also contribute a deathless value insofar as they explicate the harmony of life with life intended in creation.[58]

All of this raises the question whether the collectives can be redeemed or converted or renewed. Can the word of God ever reach "the heart of nations and cultures?" Niebuhr's answer is complex. He says that they know a level of despair which the individual does not know; for collectives have no other life than their historical life. Therefore collective man clings more desperately to his life than does the individual. It is not impossible for collectives to be reformed rather than destroyed. There are, in prime Niebuhrian phraseology, "indeterminant possibilities" of such renewal. However, Niebuhr qualifies his optimism: "But the judgments of God are not so clear to nations or cultures that they could escape a final Nemesis."[59] The "nemesis" comes to a nation in some situation of "success" as a final form of hybris.

His dialectical vision of the possibilities and limitations of collectives informs the role of the church in relation to them.

> Ideally the Christian community is "the saving remnant" which calls nations to repentance and renewal without the false belief that any nation or culture could finally fulfill the meaning of life or complete the purpose of history.[60]

History is thus seen as a realm of conflict between powers in which they operate to remind one another of their mutual contingency and to keep one or another from gaining absolute power. Justice, as seen above, is found in the balancing of these powers.

Niebuhr's classic political statement was in his defense of democracy, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness.[61] His vision of the transcendence and relevance of the kingdom of God is extended into his anthropology and political philosophy, exemplified here in this most famous of his epigrams:

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[58] _FH_, p. 231.

[59] _FH_, pp. 229-230.

[60] _FH_, p. 230.

> Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.[62]

The thesis of this book was that "a free society prospers best in a cultural, religious and moral atmosphere which encourages neither a too pessimistic nor too optimistic view of human nature."[63] The children of light are those näive idealists who are too optimistic and thereby moral sentimentalists. The children of darkness are the moral cynics who are too pessimistic, who know no law beyond their own strength. Both groups, Niebuhr contends, encourage totalitarian regimes. Human intelligence, according to Niebuhr, was not as pure an instrument of universal justice as liberal children of light assume, nor is it as purely an instrument of the ego as the pessimistic children of darkness assume.[64] Niebuhr wanted a realism without cynicism.

Because he saw the ambiguity of power, he could neither demonize the powers and separate himself from the political realm of power nor justify the powers and enter the realm of power uncritically. Recognizing that the world of politics is "full of demonic forces," he chose to support "the devil of vengeance against the devil of hypocrisy." But also acknowledging the demonry in both paths he commented,

> For that reason we respect those who try to have no traffic with devils at all. We cannot follow them because we believe that

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[61] CLCD, op. cit. [62] CLCD, p. xiii. [63] CLCD, p. xiii.

[64] CLCD, p. 29; the latter derive their thought from people like Luther and Hobbes.

> consistency would demand flight to the monastery . . . . But our traffic with devils may lead to corruption and the day may come when we will be grateful for those who try to restrain all demons rather than choose between them.[65]

Sin and the "Powers"

Niebuhr's theology of the "powers" corresponds to his anthropology because of the organic connection between individuals and collectives. The distinction between them is crucial but not absolute; it is one of intensity rather than essence. It is therefore necessary to look now at his anthropology as it pertains to sin and evil. As we should expect, his anthropology is also dialectical in character. The second volume of Nature and Destiny of Man attempts a synthesis between the optimistic Renaissance view of man and the pessimistic Reformation view of man. Because of the modern liberal inclination toward the former, Niebuhr emphasized the latter, but this emphasis should not obscure his overall purpose to synthesize the two.

The Reformation correctly saw the ultimate answer of grace to the problem of sin; but in its weakness it "did not illumine the possibilities and limits of realizing increasing truth and goodness in every conceivable historic and social situation."[66] The great Renaissance insight was that life and history were "filled with indeterminate possibilities." It ignored the Reformation insight that the pretension to complete life and to eliminate the final corruptions of history should be disavowed.[67] Niebuhr's own synthesis was expressed this way:

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[65] "Do the State . . . ." op. cit., p. 19.

[66] NDM, II, pp. 204-205.

[67] NDM, II, p. 207.

> The double aspect of grace, the twofold emphasis upon the obligation to fulfill the possibilities of life and upon the limitations and corruptions in all historic realizations, implies that history is a meaningful process but is incapable of fulfilling itself and therefore points beyond itself to the judgment and mercy of God for its fulfillment.[68]

The reason for the optimism _and_ pessimism in Niebuhr's anthropology is that he saw the essence of man in his freedom, or self-transcendence.[69] Man was bound neither to his reason nor his vitalities. "Good" could not be located in either, nor could "evil" be located in either. Thereby Niebuhr steered clear of both idealistic and naturalistic views of man. Man's freedom or power of self-transcendence denied a pessimistic view of man as trapped within reason or nature. By the same token, it denied an optimistic view of man derived from a scheme to "save" man from one realm into the other.

The depth dimension of man in Niebuhr's thought does justice to his capacity for good and evil. Man sins at a depth which involves with complexity all of his being--mind and body, reason and impulse.

> The Christian estimate of human evil is so serious precisely because it places evil at the very centre of human personality.[70]

Man stands "at the juncture of nature and spirit." His freedom of spirit causes him to break the harmonies of nature. The pride of his spirit keeps him from establishing a new harmony.[71] Sin is deeper than reason or impulse or even social institutions.[72] But man's capacity for good is also located in his freedom. The capacity for good denies the overly pessimistic views of man which feed the totalitarian politics of the children of darkness. Niebuhr's dialectical view of man saw evil at the heart of the human personality;[73] good and evil were so inextricably bound that he could say that the possibilities of evil grow with the possibilities for good.[74]

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[68] _NDM_, II, p. 211.

[69] _NDM_, II, p. 207.

[70] _NDM_, I, p. 16.

[71] _NDM_, I, p. 17.

[72] _NDM_, I, p. 103.

The sin of man is his attempt to deny his finitude; thus sin arises out of anxiety. Sin may thereby take the form of pride in which one claims unconditioned significance for oneself. Sin may also take the form of sensuality: the attempt to indulge the self and/or to escape the self by immersion in particular impulses and desires or by identification with, or devotion to, another self.[75] We can see in Niebuhr's definition of sin a ready application to the sin of collectives. A man may funnel his sin of pride into the pride of a group. Or he may exercise the sin of sensuality through devotion to a group claiming or accepting unconditioned devotion. Sin is in the lust for power (pride) and the denial of selfhood (sensuality). Sin also has both religious and moral dimensions. The religious dimension is one's rebellion against God in the attempt to usurp the place of God. The moral dimension is expressed in social injustice.[76]

Niebuhr's optimism rescues us from cynicism. His pessimism, which is much profounder than any secular pessimism, throws us on our knees before the mercy of God. Niebuhr here utilizes the Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith. God's justification enables us to act in a sinful world. It also prohibits us from calling "good" or normative those compromises and power moves necessary to achieve justice in this sinful world. His pessimism battles rigorously against all forms of Christian perfectionism; his optimism never lets us resign ourselves to moral complacency.

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[73] FH, p. 122.

[74] ICE, p. 92.

[75] NDM, I, pp. 186-203 (for sin as pride); pp. 228-240 (for sin as sensuality).

[76] NDM, I, p. 179.

Eschatology, History and the "Powers"

The relationship between the kingdom of God and history is the same as between Christ and the "powers": it is transcendent and relevant. Niebuhr's major polemical target is the liberal progress view of history. He believes that the single article of faith for modern culture was the belief that "historical development is a redemptive process."[77] Christian faith distinguishes itself from this modern creed in its belief "that both time and history point beyond themselves to a more ultimate source of meaning."[78] True to his dialectical thought, Niebuhr maintains that the "goodness of Christ must be embodied in the stuff of history. But it can never be so embodied that it does not also stand in contradiction to history in judgment."[79] The symbol of the Anti-Christ signifies "that history remains open to all possibilities of good and evil to the end."[80] The symbol of the Last Judgment emphasizes "the moral ambiguity of history to the end."[81] It negates utopian illusions and progressive interpretations of history. Faith in the parousia, in a triumphant judge and redeemer, expresses the faith "that existence cannot ultimately defy its own norm."[82] Balancing Reformation and Renaissance insights in his theology of history as well as in his anthropology, Niebuhr asserts that history has both "indeterminate possibilities" and enduring corruptions.

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[77] FH, p. 2.

[78] FH, p. 38.

[79] FH, p. 213.

[80] FH, p. 235.

[81] FH, p. 237.

[82] NDM, II, p. 290.

Niebuhr himself changed somewhat in his thought from an early view of history as ending in "perfect tragedy" to a view of history with hope and assurance "beyond tragedy." The motif of the "irony of history" replaced the category of "tragedy."[83] However, even amid some change constant motifs endure in his thought: 1) the liberal view of progress in history is an illusion and is unbiblical; 2) the kingdom of God is transcendent and relevant to history; 3) in history, we have a disclosure of the meaning of history, but not a fulfillment of history; 4) history nevertheless is meaningful.

Niebuhr's polemic against liberalism's faith in the moral progress of history is well known and needs no further explication here. His dialectical relating of the kingdom of God and history follows his basic theological pattern as we have presented it. History "fulfills and negates the kingdom of God."[84] Put another way, "Grace is continuous with, and in contradiction to, nature."[85] Often he reminded us that perfect agape-love becomes a suffering love in history. That will not change:

> The love which enters history as suffering love, must remain suffering love in history. Since this love is the very law of history, it may have its tentative triumphs even in history; for human history cannot stand in complete contradiction to itself.[86]

The "self-destruction" of the two demonic movements, facism and communism, was to Niebuhr a manifestation of the law of love as the very rule of history and of God's sovereignty over history.[87]

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[83] See MMIS, p. 2; Beyond Tragedy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), pp. ix-xi; The Irony of American History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), pp. 1-16 and 151-174; and Stone, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

[84] NDM, II, p. 204. [85] NDM, II, p. 204. [86] NDM, II, p. 49.

It is a major Niebuhrian assumption that in history we have the disclosure of its meaning but not its fulfillment. The kingdom of God "as it has come in Christ means a disclosure of the meaning of history but not the full realization of that meaning."[88] There are provisional meanings of history in history, but the final meaning can be anticipated only by faith.[89] Indeed, the greatest evil comes from the act of unfaith which tries to overcome the limitations of history and posit in it the final perfect society. In Niebuhr's words, "the grossest forms of evil enter into history as schemes of redemption."[90] The necessity of the New Testament eschatological expectations was, for Niebuhr, in their critical function: they prohibit false centers of meaning in history.[91]

Even though the final meaning of history is beyond history, history is not robbed of its significance. Those "provisional meanings" are truly important. Our action must be one tempered with humility since we know the fragmentary and broken character of all historic achievements.[92] Because the kingdom is relevant as well as transcendent, it constantly impinges upon history, "upon man's every decision and . . . every action."[93] A classic statement summarizes his theology of history:

> The new world must be built by resolute men who "when hope is dead will hope by faith"; who will neither seek premature escape from the guilt of history, nor yet call the evil, which taints all their achievements, good . . . . History moves towards the realization

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[87] "The Theme of Evanston," Christianity and Crisis, 14 (August 9, 1959), p. 109.

[88] NDM, II, p. 288. [89] FH, p. 214. [90] FH, p. 214.

[91] FH, p. 214. [92] CLCD, pp. 189-190.

[93] Beyond Tragedy, op. cit., p. 227.

> of the kingdom but yet the judgment of God is upon every new realization.[94]

Daniel Day Williams has been a most probing critic of Reinhold Niebuhr's theology of history.[95] In his critique he raises issues that Reinhold's brother H. Richard raised regarding his brother.[96] His question to Reinhold is whether Niebuhr in his critique of exaggerated expressions of liberal optimism has overlooked the central Christian theme, "that God does transform human life."[97] He suggests that since Niebuhr finds meaning ultimately only in "complete victory" over evil, history depends upon something "beyond history" for its meaning.[98] Williams sees an illustration in Niebuhr's sharp distinction between perfect agape love, the "impossible possibility" (with a stress on the adjective), and the mutual love realizable in history. Niebuhr responded that he never insisted on a sharp distinction between the two, only that he fought against the liberal tendency to identify the two thus making agape and the kingdom a simple historical possibility. According to the liberal illusion,

> . . . we are promised that if suffering love becomes sufficiently general it will cease to be suffering and change society into a

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[94] NDM, II, pp. 285-286.

[95] Daniel Day Williams, "Niebuhr and Liberalism" in Kegley and Bretall, op. cit., pp. 194-213.

[96] See this heated conversation between the two brothers in 1932: H. R. Niebuhr, "The Grace of Doing Nothing," The Christian Century, 49 (March 23, 1932), pp. 378-380; R. Niebuhr, "Must We Do Nothing?" The Christian Century, 49 (March 30, 1932), pp. 415-417; H. R. Niebuhr, "The Only Way in the Kingdom of God," The Christian Century, 49 (April 6, 1932), p. 447. Also see H. R. Niebuhr's Christ and Culture in which he places Reinhold in a "Christ and Culture Paradox" type over against his favored "Christ Transforming Culture" type.

[97] Williams, p. 205.

[98] Ibid., p. 207.

harmony of life in which no one need suffer.[99]

Niebuhr reaffirmed to Williams the tragic dimension of history in which "the meaning of life always transcends the fulfillment of meaning in history."[100]

The "Powers" in Political Philosophy

Niebuhr's dialectical theology is illustrated in his rejection of liberal politics, his rejection of conservative politics and his formulation of a Christian Realism which balanced the former's optimistic idealism and the latter's pessimistic realism. His political philosophy follows tenaciously on the heels of his theological motifs of the transcendence and relevance of the kingdom ideal to history, and the synthesis between man's capacity for good and inclination to injustice.

Niebuhr, as shown above, was a leading critic of theological and political liberalism. He outlined the Liberal Creed as follows: a) injustice is caused by ignorance and will yield to education and greater intelligence; b) civilization is becoming gradually more moral; c) the character of individuals rather than social systems is the guarantee of justice in society; d) appeals to love, justice, goodwill and brotherhood are efficacious; e) goodness makes for happiness and increasing knowledge of this fact will overcome selfishness and greed; f) wars are stupid and can therefore only be caused by people who are more stupid than those who recognize its stupidity.[101] According to

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[99] "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," Kegley and Bretall, p. 442.

[100] Ibid.

[101] "The Blindness of Liberalism," Radical Religion, I (Autumn, 1936), p. 4, summarized from Ronald Stone's citation of it in Stone, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

Niebuhr, the "blindness of liberalism" was its blindness "to the perennial difference between human actions and aspirations, the perennial source of conflict between life and life . . . ."[102] Niebuhr's dissaffection was with the Wilsonian form of liberal idealism which had resulted in the mood of despair in the 1920's. As Stone clearly portrays, later in life Niebuhr was to take up the pragmatic liberal politics exemplified by Franklin D. Roosevelt.[103] But Niebuhr's pragmatic liberalism was always "checked" by his "realism."

Niebuhr has been called one of the major founders of political realism.[104] Kenneth Thompson derives five common elements from the thought of such political realists as Niebuhr, George F. Kennan, and Hans J. Morgenthau:

> 1) the tendency to avoid moral absolutes in international politics; 2) a rejection of the escape from power politics attempted by writers on international relations in the 1920's and 1930's; 3) a distrust of concepts of human perfectibility and moral progress in human affairs; 4) a passion for the study and interpretation of history; 5) the conviction that a rather explicit conception of man is helpful to political thought.[105]

Niebuhr defined his "realism" this way:

> In political and moral theory "realism" denotes the disposition to take all factors in a social and political situation, which offer resistance to established norms, into account, particularly the factors of self-interest and power.[106]

Niebuhr said to Ronald Stone in an interview that the central problem of political philosophy is the relationship of man's ideal or imaginary communities to the actual communities in which he lives.[107] In our theological context this is the issue of the relationship of the kingdom of God to history or of Christ to the "powers." In Man's Nature and His Communities, Niebuhr dialectically criticizes "idealist" and "realist" political theories as they both deal with this central problem.

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[102] Ibid., as cited in Stone, p. 40.

[103] Stone, pp. 131-167. [104] Ibid., p. 169.

[105] From Kenneth W. Thompson, Political Realism and the Crisis of World Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 50-61. Summarized by Stone, op. cit., p. 170.

[106] CR, op. cit., p. 119.

The "Realist" sees human freedom as disruptive to community. The "Idealist" believes that our rational-moral sense can overcome our self-regard. Realists obscure the residual moral and social sense in even the most self-regarding men and nations. Idealists obscure the residual and collective self-regard in the most "saved" or rational individuals and groups.[108] Niebuhr's Christian Realism has this assumption: "The Christian faith holds that human nature contains both self-regarding and social impulses and that the former is stronger than the latter."[109]

Niebuhr relates the idealist/realist issue to the Judeo-Christian heritage. Old Testament messianic pictures of the perfect life are,

> . . . potential generators of an idealistic utopian vision, creative in projecting ultimate and ideal goals for human communities, but confusing whenever they obscure the perennial force of the factors in human nature which prevent the fulfillment of these ideal goals.[110]

Throughout his life Niebuhr fought utopianism which confused the creative vision with historical possibility.

Jesus' life and death on the cross was, according to Niebuhr, "the initial statement of a 'realistic' interpretation of human history."[111] Paul balanced his idealism (agape as the standard,

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[197] Stone, op. cit., p. 11. [108] MNHC, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

[109] MNHC, p. 39. [110] MNHC, p. 40. [111] MNHC, p. 41.

I Cor. 12-13) with his realism (the role of civil authority, Romans 13:1-7).[112]

Paul's idealism and realism were expressed in a dualism by Augustine and Luther. Niebuhr criticizes their dualism for resulting in a realism which was too consistent to give a true picture of man's capacities for good as well as evil.[113] Thomas Aquinas took up the idealist tradition in his natural law, "the participation of rational creatures in the eternal law."[114] The idealistic and classical natural law tradition had the conviction that nature and history were governed by inflexible forms of "universals." This tradition was challenged by "nominalism," natural sciences, and later by Marx. The point of attack was "the idealogical taint of self-interest in the most rationally conceived social standards."[115] In modern political theory Thomas Hobbes and John Locke represent the realist and idealist poles. Hobbes' pessimistic view of man and reason led to an "extravagant realism" that made the social contract the "basis for political absolutism."[116] Locke drew democratic conclusions from the social contract theory because of his extravagant idealism and individualism which obscured the factor of collective self-interest.[117]

The liberal idealism of American democracy, according to Niebuhr, is based on an illusion about human nature and has led to moral hypocrisy in American political thought. But Niebuhr also criticizes the thought of the "most brilliant and authoritative political realist, Hans Morgenthau."[118] Morgenthau comes to grips with collective egoism and challenges the nation's hypocrisy, but he denies the residual human capacity for social community and separates love and power too dualistically.[119] Stone is correct as he sees Morgenthau pressing Niebuhr's realism to the extreme, emphasizing the dualism of morality and politics.[120] The political sphere in Morgenthau's thought becomes an autonomous sphere. If Niebuhr had seen only the transcendence of the kingdom he might have fallen into Morgenthau's too consistent realism, but the relevance of the kingdom qualifies his dualism and maintains the tension between the ideals of justice and love and the realities of the political realm.

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[112] MNHC, p. 43. [113] MNHC, p. 46. [114] MNHC, p. 49.

[115] MNHC, p. 51. [116] MNHC, p. 56.

[117] MNHC, p. 58ff.

Niebuhr's Christian Realism keeps the two realms of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world in constant tension. His is a tension-filled dualism in which justice needs the balance of power to control conflicting egoism but never reduces itself to a mere balance of power. As we noted, for Niebuhr, justice which is only justice soon becomes less than justice. His dialectical and realistic view of justice is well expressed here:

> . . . political justice is achieved, not merely by destroying, but also by deflecting, beguiling and harnessing residual self-interest and by finding the greatest possible concurrence between self-interest and the general welfare.[121]

The question of Niebuhr's relationship to conservatism has been raised since the 1950's. Eduard Heimann sees Niebuhr's pragmatism by application as "an authentic conservatism."[122] Will Herberg, a noted conservative who had been "converted" by Neibuhr's thought at a crux in his life, places Niebuhr in the school of the "new conservatism."[123] William Hamilton saw this as part of Niebuhr's legacy, commenting that "old Niebuhrians tended to go to the back pages of the National Review to die."[124]

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[118] MNHC, pp. 71ff.

[119] MNHC, pp. 71-76.

[120] Stone, pp. 200-204.

[121] CLCD, p. 186.

[122] Eduard Heimann, "Niebuhr's Pragmatic Conservatism," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 11 (May, 1956), p. 7.

Niebuhr is best judged as one who appreciated some key insights from the conservative (e.g., Edmund Burke) tradition but whose dialectical thought never let him settle into a consistent conservatism or realism. Compared with liberal utopian or revolutionary schemes, Niebuhr's theology appears conservative, but Niebuhr was more afraid of utopian totalitarianism than of incomplete manifestations of perfect justice. His realism was a different kind than that of conservatism:

> . . . a realist conception of human nature should be made the servant of an ethic of progressive justice and should not be made into a bastion of conservatism, particularly a conservatism which defends unjust privileges.[125]

While Niebuhr affirmed the liberal spirit of openness and orientation toward freedom, he rejected the liberal creed. While he rejected the conservative spirit which tends to defend the status quo, he accepted part of the conservative creed. For example: 1) the emphasis on historical rather than abstract modes of social engineering; 2) the recognition of society's recalcitrance to moral norms; and, 3) an understanding of politics as the art of the possible, being cautious not to fall into a worse form of injustice in the effort to eliminate old ones.[126]

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[123] Will Herberg, "Christian Apologist to the Secular World," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 11 (May, 1956), p. 15.

[124] William Hamilton, "The New Optimism - From Profrock to Ringo," Theology Today, 22 (January, 1966), p. 480.

[125] CR, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

Commenting on Russell Kirk's The Conservative Mind, Niebuhr once again sought to clarify alternatives for the Christian in politics. Traditional liberalism had admirable passion for justice, but blindness to factors of interest and power. Traditional conservatism understood the necessities of coercion and the factors of interest and power, but it tended toward uncritical devotion to any existent status quo. Kirk had discovered the realism of Edmund Burke, but tended to mix it with an uncritical acceptance of inequality and injustice. Niebuhr was surprised that Kirk, a "modern conservative," should "think it possible and necessary to reconstruct a traditional order and bless its inequalities as necessary." In the same respect, he was also surprised at liberals who believe that realism must be an ally of conservatism.[127]

Niebuhr criticized conservatism in America at several points. The primary critique was its allegiance to the laissez faire politics of the dominant business community in America.[128] Its defense of the status quo was until F. D. Roosevelt's time a defense of a policy permitting a degree of non-interference by the state in the economy, making America "a paradise for all true devotees of laissez-faire."[129] Niebuhr contended that the conservative business community chose for ideological reasons that part of the liberal creed which supported their unchecked interests. Therefore, Niebuhr chose to back the left-of-center liberalism of F. D. Roosevelt for its domestic sense of justice and its realistic foreign policy rather than the "conservative liberalism" of Republican politics which was aristocratic at home (interested in freeing the economy from state interference) and irresponsible abroad.[130]

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[126] Ibid., pp. 71-73.

[127] Christianity and Society, 20 (Winter, 1954-1955), pp. 3-4.

[128] CR, p. 53.

[129] CR, p. 56.

Niebuhr's Christian Realism decried the sentimentality of liberalism and the cynicism of conservatism. Even though he criticized the tendency of Augustinian thought toward extreme dualism (culminating in Luther), he saw Augustine as his "father" in Christian Realism. Augustine was the first great realist in Western history,

> . . . because his picture of social reality in his civitas dei gives an adequate account of the social factions, tensions, and competitions which we know to be well-nigh universal on every level of community; while the classical age conceived the order and justice of its polis to be a comparatively simple achievement, which would be accomplished when reason had brought all subrational forces under its dominion.[131]

But Augustine's realism concerning the civitas terrena did not lead to cynicism because the civitas dei "commingled" with the city of man. Its principle, the "love of God," commingled with the principle of the city of this world, the love of self.[132]

> Augustine's formula for leavening the city of this world with the city of God is more adequate than classical and medieval thought. both in doing justice to the endless varieties of historical occasions and configurations and in drawing upon the resources of love rather than law in modifying human behavior.[133]

We see that Niebuhr's political philosophy, his Christian Realism, sought to distinguish itself both from the "new liberal" political philosophy (as distinguished from classical liberalism which is more akin to what we call conservative today) and also the "new conservatism."

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[130] CR, pp. 59ff.

[131] CR, pp. 120-121.

[132] CR, p. 130.

[133] CR, p. 134.

Nonetheless, he has been accused of being both a liberal and a conservative. Speaking in 1960 to Americans For Democratic Action on "The Tasks of Liberalism in America," Niebuhr criticized the "new conservatives" for seeking to free the economy from all moral and political restraints and defined carefully the proper tasks of a kind of liberalism he now could accept. This liberalism: 1) makes justice rather than simple order the goal using equality and liberty as regulative principles and renouncing utopianism; 2) opposes that conservatism interested in preserving the status quo; 3) is empirical and pragmatic. In short, realism and pragmatism saves the modern or new liberalism from utopianism.[134] Niebuhr's Christian Realism was, at the end of his life, a pragmatic liberalism which incorporated the realism of the new conservatism while denying its cynicism and incorporated the moral idealism of liberalism while denying its utopianism. In the language of this dissertation, Christ is neither isolated from nor identified with the "powers."

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have concentrated on how Reinhold Niebuhr relates Christ and his law of love to the structural social "powers." For Niebuhr this issue is essentially that of the relation of the City of God to the City of Man, of ethics to politics, of sacrificial love to mutual love, and of the kingdom to history. His dialectical form is most simply put: the kingdom of God is both transcendent and relevant.

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[134] Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Tasks of Liberalism in America." Speech to Americans for Democratic Action, May, 1960, in Washington, D. C.

This means that the kingdom is both organically connected with this world and also judge over it. It means that the law of love is the basis of mutual love and yet also judges it. It means that ethics and politics can make compromises with one antoher, but these are uneasy tension-filled compromises. It means that man has both capacities for good and for evil, that history has indeterminate possibilities and enduring corruptions, and that communities have both social impulses and self-regarding impulses. It means that history has a disclosure of meaning within it but the fulfillment of history lies beyond history; that history can approximate the kingdom but the kingdom judges each approximation. It means that any theology or ethic or political theory must consider man's capacity for good and evil. It means that grace is continuous with and in opposition to nature. It means, negatively put, that the kingdom can neither be separated from nor identified with history, that sacrificial love can neither be separated from nor identified with mutual love, and that politics can neither be separated from nor identified with the divine values of love and justice. It means that ethics must be neither sentimental nor cynical, that political theory must be neither too idealistic nor too realistic, and that neither the children of light nor the children of darkness shall inherit the kingdom. It means that love is the "impossible possibility." If the kingdom were only transcendent, love would be impossible; if the kingdom were only relevant, love would be a simple possibility. Roger Shinn has summed up beautifully Niebuhr's dialectical Christian Realism:

> Reinhold Niebuhr was the prophet of love as the impossible possibility. He was also the advocate of the kind of political activity that organizes power to confront oppressive power. His gift . . .

was to combine the art of the possible with the impossible possibility.[135]

Applying Niebuhr's thought to the question of Christ and the "powers" and using our four motifs of the Lordship of Christ, the eschatological battle, the fallenness of the powers and the demonic capacity of the powers, these conclusions may be reached regarding Niebuhr's thought.

Eschatology and the "powers." Eschatology is conceived more vertically than temporally for Niebuhr.[136] There is no progressive, developmental march of history toward the kingdom. He looked toward the final victory of God but it was more an apocalyptic final victory over evil than a progressively won victory. In Niebuhr's eyes, the possibility of evil increases with the possibility of good. There would be no utopian stage or scheme of history. The kingdom of God impinges upon every moment of history, but there is no automatic progress in history.

The eschatological battle with the "powers" is thus the same in every age: to restrain the egoism of the powers through the balancing of the "powers." The powers can be made more just but never in a final or complete way. The struggle will continue with victories and defeats until the end of history when by faith we hope for God's consummating victory.

Christ as Lord of the "powers." For Christ to be Lord of the "powers" means, for Niebuhr, that Christ's values and purposes should never be separated from the realm of the "powers." To do so would be to fall into the dualism of which he accused Martin Luther. On the other hand, the values of Christ will never be fully manifest in the "powers" in history. Therefore, the "powers" cannot be "Christianized" or redeemed in history. To think so is sheer sentimentality and a liberal illusion.

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[135] Roger Shinn, "Realism, Radicalism, and Eschatology" in Nathan Scott, Jr., ed., The Legacy of Reinhold Niebuhr (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 99.

[136] For a cogent comparison of Niebuhr's theology of history with

The "powers" as fallen. The sin, or fallenness, of the "powers" is continuous with the sin of man; it is not of a different kind but the same, only intensified. The root of sin is anxiety caused by the fear of finitude. A collective's sin is doubly anxious because its only life is historical. Collective egoism is not convertible to agape love but it is restrainable.

However, the fallenness of the "powers" is not to be termed demonic because collectives, e.g., the nation and the State, have positive values and functions: they bestow order, structure and meaning. Their value, however, can become too great, leading to demonic perversion.

The demonic "powers." The powers become demonic, i.e., as in fascism and communism, when they usurp the place of God and make unconditional claims. The larger the collective, the more it tends toward demonic pretension. Their demonry is the unrestrained lust of power or pride. As sin takes the form of sensuality, a demonic manifestation is the person's capitulation to a collective ego in which one loses selfhood and escapes from freedom.

Because sin and evil are located in the freedom of human personhood where goodness and creativity also preside, it is a necessary

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that of the eschatological theologians see Langdon Gilkey, "Reinhold Niebuhr's Theology of History" in Nathan Scott, op. cit., pp. 36-62.

continuing aspect of historical existence. Sin is deeper than any simple plan of redemption. Utopian schemes of the redemption of the "powers," whether idealistic (Locke), naturalistic (Marx), or totalitarian (Hitler), are likely to cause more evil than the evil they seek to correct. But because the law of love is the very law of life, man and the "powers" cannot completely contradict it without destroying themselves. Therefore steps toward love and justice can and must be made.

BY WAY OF CRITIQUE

Niebuhr's dialectical mode of thought is helpful in protecting truth from half-truth. His polemical style continually critiques two opposing views in order to find a path in between. I have termed Niebuhr's position on the "powers" as Christ transcendent and relevant to the "powers." The transcendence of Christ keeps his position from a too complacent "Christ of the powers" position or a too simplistic "Christ transforming the powers" position. The relevance of Christ to the powers prevents him from a too consistent dualism. At this point I would qualify how H. Richard Niebuhr puts his brother in the Lutheran "Christ and Culture in Paradox" position. To be sure, there are similarities, but Reinhold Niebuhr's rigorous dialectic prevents a simple dualism.

However, if I must criticize Niebuhr in terms of how his judgments follow from his dialectical framework, I would say that Niebuhr is more apt to collapse the tension on the side of the transcendence of Christ than on Christ's relevance. His is a dialectic tipped in favor of transcendence and therefore in favor of "realism." Because of this inclination, Christ's values have more a critical function than a constructive function. Niebuhr expects them to work out as judgment more than as model in history. In contrast Rauschenbusch favors the relevance of Christ, applying Christ's values directly and simply, and emphasizing that Christ transforms the "powers." In light of this analysis I would question Niebuhr most pointedly about Christ's Lordship of the "powers." Do they have a Christological foundation? Is there an organic relationship between Christ and the "powers"? The most explicit Niebuhr is on the nature of the organic realtionship between the two is that the "powers" cannot betray the law of love without destroying themselves.

In terms of his eschatology I ask along with Daniel Day Williams whether he so narrowly defines God's victory in terms of a complete or perfect victory that he underplays the partial victories, thereby locating history's fulfillment beyond history. While his vertical eschatology protects history from the liberal illusion of progress, does it deny the transforming presence of God within history? The critique is not aimed at any imperfections in his dialectical formulations, but at those tendencies to depart from his dialectical purity and slip into undialectical errors.

Chapter 4

THE THEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF ERIC VOEGELIN AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL THOUGHT: GOD OF THE "POWERS" AND CHRIST SEPARATED FROM THE "POWERS"

The last two decades of Reinhold Niebuhr's life, the 1950's and 1960's, witnessed the rise of the "new conservatives" in America. This revival of conservative intellectual and political thought sometimes claimed Reinhold Niebuhr as an exponent of its position. To be sure there were some similarities, as Niebuhr himself confessed. Both emphasized the sinful state of humankind. Peter Viereck, a leading conservative philospher, calls conservatism a "political secularization of original sin."[1] However, there are also distinctive emphases which are of crucial importance.

In this chapter I shall analyze the theological assumptions of the conservative intellectual movement in America. I choose Eric Voegelin as my principal representative for two reasons: 1) he is highly regarded and eagerly appropriated as a seminal scholar by American conservatives; and 2) he has worked extensively in Judeo-Christian heritage and origins, a fact which allows us to compare him more easily with our other theologians. He, by trade, is a philosopher rather than a theologian; however, his theological assumptions are highly evident and carefully constructed. In this chapter I shall first describe the conservative intellectual movement in America clarifying Eric Voegelin's place within it. Then as the main purpose of the chapter, I shall present the theological assumptions of Voegelin's philosophy of history and political science. Within the frame of this dissertation's problem, Voegelin's position on Christ and the "powers" is: God of the "powers" and Christ separated from the "powers."

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[1] Peter Viereck, "The Philosophical 'New Conservatism'" in Daniel Bell, ed., The Radical Right (New York: Anchor Books, 1964), p. 199.

THE CONSERVATIVE TRADITION IN AMERICA

The conservative intellectual tradition in America often is associated politically with figures such as Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan and William F. Buckley, Jr. Its literature, like Buckley's National Review, and its philosophers, like Eric Voegelin, Peter Viereck, Russell Kirk, and Leo Strauss, trace their own roots deeply into the Western moral and intellectual tradition. This tradition distinguishes itself not only from the liberal intellectual tradition but also from the radical right fringe associated with Robert Welch's John Birch Society and Billy James Hargis' Christian Crusade.

Conservatives draw upon the orthodox moral, intellectual and political traditions of the Western world. William Buckley recommends as prolegomena to readings in more recent conservative thought "some Plato, particularly The Republic, and the Socratic dialogues . . . . Aristotle's Ethics, St. Augustine's Confessions, Virgil's Aeneid and the New Testament."[2] How conservatives interpret and use this broad and deep tradition is of crucial importance. Buckley, as do many conservatives, commends Eric Voegelin's interpretation of Western tradition.[3] Voegelin's interpretation is a good example of a variety of interpretations with common insights and "prejudices" (an approved word in conservative parlance) which make them "conservative."

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[2] William F. Buckley, ed., Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?: American Conservative Thought in the Twentieth Century (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970), p. xlvii; hereafter designated ACTTC.

The "new conservatives" claim a distinguished American and British tradition which goes back to the political philosophy of Edmund Burke. Many conservatives root modern conservatism in the conservative response to the French Revolution, and Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France, published in 1790, is considered a seminal conservative document.

Russell Kirk's The Conservative Mind[4] is considered not only an excellent survey of conservative thought from Burke to Santayana, but also a catalyst to the emergence of the conservative intellectual movement since its publication in 1953.[5] William Buckley says that Russell Kirk's books "have done more to reanimate a full-bodied conservatism than anyone else's."[6] The Conservative Mind offers a composite picture of those ideas which are "conservative." The essence of social conservatism, Kirk says, is "preservation of the ancient moral traditions of humanity."[7] Conservatives "respect the wisdom of their ancestors"; moreover,

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[3] ACTTC, p. 399.

[4] Russell Kirk, The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954, rev. ed.).

[5] George H. Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: Since 1945 (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), p. 69.

[6] In David Franke, ed., Quotations From Chairman Bill (New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington House, 1970), p. 301.

[7] Kirk, p. 7.

> . . . they are dubious of wholesale alteration. They think society is a spiritual reality, possessing an eternal life but a delicate constitution: it cannot be scrapped and recast as if it were a machine.[8]

Kirk lists six canons of conservative thought:

> 1) Belief that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience, forging an eternal chain of right and duty . . . . Political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems . . . . Politics is the art of apprehending and applying the Justice which is above nature . . . .
> 2) Affection for the proliferating variety and mystery of traditional life, as distinguished from the narrowing uniformity and equalitarianism and utilitarian aims of most radical systems . . . .
> 3) Conviction that civilized society requires orders and classes. The only true equality is moral equality; all other attempts at levelling lead to despair, if enforced by positive legislation . . . .
> 4) Persuasion that property and freedom are inseparably connected, and that economic levelling is not economic progress . . . .
> 5) Faith in prescription . . . . Man must put control upon his will and his appetite, for conservatives know man to be governed more by emotion than by reason. Tradition and sound prejudice provide checks upon man's anarchic impulse . . . .
> 6) Recognition that change and reform are not identical, and that innovation is a devouring conflagration more often than it is a torch of progress. Society must alter . . . but Providence is the proper instrument for change . . . .[9]

The major opponents of conservativism help clarify its definition. Kirk lists five radical opponents: 1) the rationalism of Hume, etc.; 2) the romantic emancipation of Rousseau; 3) the utilitarianism of the Benthamites; 4) the positivism of Comte; and 5) the collectivistic materialism of Marx.[10] The five common elements of radicalism according to Kirk are: 1) the perfectibility of man and the unlimited progress of society, i.e., "meliorism"; man's natural proclivity toward sin and violence is denied; 2) contempt for tradition; 3) political levelling, i.e., total democracy; 4) economic levelling; and 5) a contempt for

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[8] Kirk, p. 7.

[9] Kirk, p. 8.

[10] Kirk, p. 8.

"Burke's description of the state as a divinely ordained moral essence . . . ."[11]

Edmund Burke is singled out by Kirk as the father of the modern school of conservatism. Burke emphasized the principle of order which Kirk feels is necessary for a free society. The temporal order is part of a larger supernatural order, and the foundation of society is reverence for this order. The first rule of society is obedience to God and the "dispensations of Providence." There is a second order of spiritual and intellectual values and a third order of duty and privilege, what Kirk calls "natural aristocracy."[12]

John Adams was, according to Kirk, the founder of true conservatism in America, a man who maintained against the idealism of Jefferson and Franklin that a free society can be maintained "only by sober men who take humanity as it is, not as humanity should be."[13] In addition to Burke and Adams, Kirk enlists the following in the conservative brigade: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Calhoun, Fenimore Cooper, Alexis de Tocqueville, Disraeli, Paul Elmer More (an aristocratic and individualistic Anglican theologian) and George Santayana. Throughout his survey Kirk advocates individuality, the rights of property ("more important than the right to life"),[14] a pessimistic view of man, and a "natural" aristocracy. The theological ideas most constant with conservative thought are the emphasis on the Providence (Order) of God, and a metaphysical dualism (which Kirk admired in More).[15] The ideas most repugnant to "the conservative mind" are, in addition to those radical ideas listed above, the idea of a planned society, the social reform of "political Christianity,"[16] "progressive education" and collectivism in all shapes and sizes.

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[11] Kirk, p. 9. [12] Kirk, p. 59. [13] Kirk, p. 62.

[14] Kirk, p. 382. [15] Kirk, p. 385.

Kirk asserts that it is not wealth that makes a person a conservative, nor power, nor timidity, nor class, nor self-interest, but rather a "deep-seated prejudice in favor of prescriptive truth."[17] In the realm of politics and economics, the conservative believes,

> . . . in established constitutions, local rights, sharp vigilance against centralization and uniformity, strict preservation of inherited liberties; economic activity humanized by being related to moral and intellectual ends, and conducted upon a human scale.[18]

Conservatism may be described differently but with important consistencies. When William F. Buckley is pressed for a simple definition of conservatism, he answers with Richard Weaver's definition: "the paradigm of essences towards which the phenomenology of the world is in continuing approximation."[19] We shall see below how appropriate this rather abstract definition is: The reality of essences, the attention to empirical phenomena, the cyclical unchanging character of the continual phenomena, and the careful reserve of stressing only our approximation of essences. The distinguished student of politics and revolution, Crane Brinton, distinguishes three kinds of conservatives:

> . . . the conservative of the dictionary, who accepts things as they are; the conservative of the flesh, who, contemptuous of his changing times, idealizes the past; and the philosophical conservative, "the man who works out a consistent and timeless generalization applying to the behaviour of men in politics."[20]

While one might project the motives and psychologisms of the first two kinds of conservatives to all conservatives, the subject of this chapter is the third kind.

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[16] Kirk, p. 415.

[17] Kirk, p. 442.

[18] Kirk, p. 442.

[19] ACTTC, p. xvii.

[20] Kirk, p. 120.

Frank S. Meyer, a prominent ex-Marxist conservative, outlines his "consensus" of American conservative beliefs: a) the assumption of the "existence of an objective moral order based upon ontological foundations"; b) the primary reference to the individual in political thought and action; c) a cast of thought which is "profoundly anti-utopian"; d) the principle of the limitation of the state; e) opposition to state control of the economy; f) firm support of the United States Constitution "as originally conceived to achieve the protection of individual liberty in an ordered society by limiting the power of government"; and g) a devotion to Western civilization and an unashamed and unself-conscious American patriotism which sees in Communism an "armed and messianic threat to the very existence of Western civilization and the United States."[21]

George H. Nash has produced a highly acclaimed volume, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: Since 1945,[22] which traces the "new conservative" movement from the 1940's to the 1970's. His effort helps us focus the background of this movement and its most recent thought. In 1945, he says, there existed no articulate, coordinated, self-consciously conservative intellectual force in America. At that time there emerged three distinct conservative voices:[23] 1) the

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[21] Frank S. Meyer, "The Recrudescent American Conservativism" in ACTTC, pp. 80-83.

[22] Nash, op. cit. His Bibliographical Essay, pp. 440-447, is an excellent introduction to the "new conservative" literature.

[23] Nash, pp. xiii-xiv.

"classical liberals" or "libertarians" resisting the threat of the expanding state to liberty, private enterprise and individualism; 2) the "new conservatism" of people like Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver and Peter Viereck, shocked by totalitarianism and secularism's mass society, who urged return to traditional religious and ethical absolutes and rejected the relativism which created the vacuum filled by "demonic ideologies"; 3) the militant evangelistic anti-communists, e.g., Whittaker Chambers and Frank S. Meyer. The consolidation of these three camps began in the 1950's and grew to become politically viable in the 1960's, to remain today an authentic intellectual community. Nash provides an exposition of this process.

The first group, the libertarians, had several leaders.[24] Warning that "planning leads to dictatorship," Friedrich Hayek's Road to Serfdom became a conservative beacon. Albert Jay Nock who wrote Memoirs of a Superfluous Man and Our Enemy, the State was a great influence on, among others, William F. Buckley, Jr., whose God and Man at Yale stirred a storm by asserting that individualism, free-enterprise, private property, and limited government were "dying at Yale and without a fight,"[25] became the editor of the journal which was to be a uniting forum for conservative thought, the National Review.

The second group, the "new conservatives," had their own intellectual leaders.[26] One, Richard M. Weaver (Ideas Have Consequences), maintained that "the first positive step must be a driving afresh of the wedge between the material and the transcendental . . . . To bring dualism back into the world . . . ."[27] Other leaders were Leo Strauss

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[24] Nash, Chapter One.

[25] Nash, p. 30.

[26] Nash, Chapters Two and Three.

[27] Nash, p. 41.

(Natural Right and History) and Eric Voegelin. Nash interprets the rise of Christian orthodoxy in the 1950's as an important facet of the rise of the conservative movement. He noted increased church attendance, the popularity of Billy Graham, Fulton Sheen and Norman Vincent Peale, and the rise of neo-orthodoxy.[28] Nash portrays the conservative brand of Christianity as follows:

> The Christianity which Hallowell, Buckley, and others defended was not the Christianity of the Social Gospel or Liberal Protestantism. It was a Christianity grounded in what was for many neo-conservatives the deepest lesson of World War II: the lesson of evil, of original sin . . . . The new conservatives brand of Christianity was often of a decidedly Catholic, even medieval cast.[29]

As Buckley mentioned above, along with the revival of earlier Christian tradition the conservative movement sparked a revival of classical political philosophy.[30] Peter Viereck (Conservatism Revisited: The Revolt Against Revolt) became an early conservative intellectual leader. It was Russell Kirk who would become a catalyst for the movement. His The Conservative Mind reanimated Edmund Burke; with Kirk's efforts, "the new conservative or traditionalist segment of the renascent American Right reached full bloom."[31] These traditionalists often were at odds with the extreme *laissez faire* doctrines of the libertarians but they joined in the fight against the "Leviathan" state and the loss of values.

The third group, the evangelistic anti-Communists, had as its diverse collection of leaders, Joseph McCarthy, Frank S. Meyer, James Burnham, Whittaker Chambers, Will Herberg, and Richard Nixon.[32] The fight against Communism tended to be a uniting effort between all three groups. The coalition was not, however, without its inner differences.[33]

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[28] He notes such neo-orthodox figures as Kierkegaard, Tillich, and Reinhold Niebuhr and C. S. Lewis; does he recognize the great differences between these men?

[29] Nash, p. 60.

[30] Nash, p. 62ff.

[31] Nash, p. 76.

[32] Nash, Chapter Four.

Consolidation of the three strands of conservatism began and progressed during the 1950's. National Review helped mold the coalition. By the early 1960's, conservatives had a bonafide national political expression, Barry Goldwater, and they had articulated their set of principles: natural law, Christian revelation, liberty under law and the limited state. The 1964 presidential election ending in Goldwater's landslide defeat created a conviction among conservatives of "the immense power and blatant bias of the news media and the unscrupulousness of their presumably responsible liberal foes."[34] Nash offers his conservative perspective on the '60's: campus disruption due to decadent "gnostic" education and the liberal-controlled media; the early Nixon/Agnew years carrying the conservative banner.[35] The '70's have witnessed the radical libertarians gaining strength and splitting from more traditional conservatism.[36] Pure laissez faire and radical decentralization become more popular especially among the young, e.g., the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). Nash also notes the conservative critique of the Nixon apostasy from true conservatism and the rise of right-wing liberalism--disillusionment of liberals with "big government."[37] Nash leaves us with a collection of "certain fundamental prejudices" of conservatism:

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[33] See Peter Viereck's critique of McCarthyism in his "The Revolt Against the Elite" in Daniel Bell, ed., The Radical Right (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1964), pp. 161-184. The critique of the "radical right" e.g., John Birch Society, by the "mainstream" right is well documented; see Nash, pp. 292ff.

[34] Nash, pp. 291f. [35] Nash, p. 296. [36] Nash, p. 314.

[37] Today's political scene is filled with examples of such new more conservative liberals, e.g., Jerry Brown, Jimmy Carter, and Gary Hart.

> . . . a presumption (of varying intensity) in favor of private property and a free enterprise economy; opposition to Communism, socialism, and utopian schemes of all kinds; support of strong national defense; belief in Christianity or Judaism (or at least the utility of such belief); acceptance of traditional morality and the need for an inelastic moral code; hostility to positivism and relativism; a 'gut affirmation' of the goodness of America and the West.[38]

Peter Viereck, a moderate conservative philosopher, offers a balanced picture of true American conservatism.[39] The rootedness of the American political tradition which conservatism should seek to preserve is a blend of "Locke's very moderate liberalism and Burke's very moderate conservatism."[40] In his opinion, the Burke-style conservatives, who revere a rooted constitution, and the Mill-style liberals, who revere civil liberties, need each other "to unite against what Metternich called 'the white radicals' of the right as well as the red radicals."[41] He makes a distinction between "rooted conservatives" and "rootless, counterrevolutionary doctrinaires" (of whom he included Kirk), between "humanistic value-conservers" and "materialistic old-guard Republicans":

> The latter are what a wrong and temporary journalistic usage often calls "conservative." It is more accurate to call them nineteenth-century Manchester liberals with roots no deeper than the relatively recent post-Civil War "guilded age."[42]

America's liberal-conservative base is more liberal than European Continental conservatives and more conservative than European Continental liberals.[43] This core is a rooted reality yielding the New Deal as well as conservative programs and opposing the "inorganic, mechanical abstractions of either a Karl Marx or an Adam Smith."[44]

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[38] Nash, p. 342.

[39] Peter Viereck, "The Philosophical 'New Conservatism' (1962)," in Bell, op. cit.

[40] Ibid., p. 188.

[41] Ibid., p. 207.

[42] Ibid., p. 197.

[43] Ibid., p. 206.

Viereck does not however blur the distinction between liberalism and the conservatism of which he himself is an advocate. He expresses it well here:

> Their contrast may be partly and briefly defined as the tragic cyclical view of man, based on a political secularization of original sin, versus the optimistic faith in the natural goodness of man and the inevitability of linear progress. In Coleridgian terms, conservatism is the concrete organic growth of institutions, as if they were trees, while rationalist liberalism is an abstract, mechanical moving around of institutions as if they were separate pieces of furniture . . . . The former is a circle, the latter an ever-advancing straight line. Both are equally needed half-truths; both are equally inherent in the human condition . . . .[45]

Viereck's own position is more dialectic, i.e., combining the two opposing insights, than most conservatives, closer to Reinhold Niebuhr than to William Buckley. Most conservatives would advocate only the "circle" and not the "ever-advancing straight line" as the paradigm for history.

In summary these characteristics can be seen in conservative thought: 1) an avowed moral base resting upon the broad moral and religious traditions of Western civilization; 2) the belief in a knowable, objective moral order, i.e., "natural law"; 3) a staunch defense of order as the prime political good; 4) a metaphysical dualism of a sinful material historical realm and a perfect transcendental spiritual realm; history thereby is more a circle or cycle than a progressive straight line; 5) a fervent anti-utopian, anti-ideological, and anti-idealistic cast; 6) the political defense of limited government, individual liberties, private property, unshackled free-enterprise, and a "natural" aristocracy; and 7) the fervent battle against all "planned" societies whether socialist or Communist.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 199.

ERIC VOEGELIN

We see in Eric Voegelin an excellent philosophical representative of conservative thought. Much quoted among conservatives, included in Buckley's collection of essays on "American Conservative Thought,"[46] subject of a symposium in the conservative journal Modern Age,[47] Voegelin is considered a major and seminal conservative scholar. Some consider him a twentieth century philosophical giant who transcends labels of conservative or liberal. One reviewer has said of his most recent volume:

> The Ecumenic Age confirms the view of those who have long held that Voegelin is the only contemporary philosopher of history whose mastery of historical sources equals that of the late Arnold Toynbee and whose philosophical acumen by far exceeds Toynbee's.[48]

His scholarship is erudite and prolific. His prodigious history of philosophical-political-religious ideas, Order and History,[49] has produced four large volumes, Israel and Revelation (I), The Polis (II), Plato and Aristotle (III), and The Ecumenic Age (IV), with one more to come. Born in Germany in 1901, and educated at the University of Vienna, Voegelin was one of those teachers dismissed (1938) by the Nazis. Brought to America with the help of William Y. Elliott of Harvard, he has taught at many universities, principally Louisiana State University.[50] An abridged list of his other major titles are suggestive of his work; (Über die Form des Amerikanischen Geistes (1928), Der Autoritäre Staat (1936), Die politischen Religionen (1938), The New Science of Politics (1952), and Science, Politics and Gnosticism (1968).

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[46] ACTTC, op. cit.

[47] "The Achievement of Eric Voegelin" Modern Age, 3 (Spring, 1959), pp. 182-196.

[48] William C. Harvard, The American Historical Review, 81 (June, 1976), p. 558.

[49] Eric Voegelin, Order and History, Vol. I, Israel and Reveolation (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956); Vol. II, The World of the Polis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957); Vol. III, Plato and Aristotle (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957); Vol. IV, The Ecumenic Age (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974).

His work is hailed by conservative thinkers. One reviewer calls him "one of the most distinguished interpreters to Americans of the non-liberal streams of European thought."[51] While his scholarship is important to scholars of all philosophical "camps," his thought is especially congenial to the conservative intellectual and political movement in America and can be used as a paradigm for those theological, or ground of meaning, assumptions which have affinity with conservative thought.

We discover Voegelin's position on Christ and the "powers" by inference. Although a Christian, Voegelin focuses not so much on Christ but on the relationship of the transcendent realm of the Unknown God to the realm of political and social order. The central problem is that of order and a major presupposition is that order in history rests upon recognition of the transcendent source of order. Moreover, disorder is caused by the demonic "immanentization" of the transcendent realm. He at one and the same time drives a wedge between the historical realm and the transcendent realm and posits an eternal tension between the two realms. These presuppositions are placed within a fierce polemic against the modern liberal intellectual tradition which in his estimation derives from and tends toward gnostic thought and politics. Unless the grip of gnostic influence is eased, the "demonic" gnostic mass movements of modernity will cause the collapse of our Western civilization.[52]

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[50] See Voegelin's entry in Who's Who in America, 37th ed., 1972-1973 (Chicago, 1972), p. 327. Voegelin has also taught at Harvard, Bennington University, Alabama University and the Hooever Institution, Stanford.

[51] Francis G. Wilson, American Political Science Review, on the back cover of Voegelin's The New Science of Politics.

This chapter cannot adequately present all of Voegelin's thought. We shall deal with how Voegelin relates God and the political realm. The exposition will be divided into three parts. First, we shall present his central thesis on politics and gnosticism. This section relates most closely to the question of eschatology raised in this dissertation: how is the present corrupt age related to the perfect ideal age? Or, how is the historical realm related to the kingdom of God? The enthusiasm issue in Corinth is closely related to Voegelin's thesis. Second, we shall present his analysis of the role of Christianity in the "history of order." This section raises the issue of the relationship of historical, social order and the transcendent realm. In theological terms it inquires into the relationship between the doctrines of Creation and Redemption, or into the relationship of God and Jesus Christ. Is God's relationship to the "powers" different from Christ's relationship to the "powers"? Third, we shall present Voegelin's understanding of the "Gospel Movement," to use his terminology. At this point the reader will get a more direct picture of how Voegelin perceives Jesus Christ. For Voegelin the question of Christ and the "powers" is better stated in terms of the transcendent realm and the historical realm. The exposition of Voegelin's thought seeks to substantiate my formulation of his Christ and the "powers" position: God of the "powers" and Christ separated from the powers.

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[52] This sense of foreboding pervades all his work.

Politics and Gnosticism

Voegelin's fame has profited most from his thesis on Gnosticism and political order. His 1952 book, The New Science of Politics,[53] became in the words of George Nash, "one of the most important books by post-war intellectuals of the Right."[54] The book was not only a highly readable and provocative interpretation of Western intellectual history but also serves as an outline to the major movements in his magnum opus Order and History. The major thesis and driving passion of the book is that Gnosticism is the "essence of modernity."[55]

Gnosticism was that ancient philosophy and religion, a rival of Christianity and a heresy within Christianity; the two locked horns among the menagerie of competing religions during the Hellenistic age. For Voegelin, Gnosticism represents more than an ancient religion. It is a way of thought and action all through Western history. It is that form of thought and action which seeks to immanentize the Christian eschaton (i.e., the kingdom of God, or the transcendental realm).[56] Voegelin says succinctly:

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[53] Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952); hereafter designated NSP.

[54] Nash, op. cit., p. 49.

[55] NSP, p. 126; Chapter 4, pp. 107-132.

[56] NSP, p. 121.

> The Gnostic revolution has for its purpose a change in the nature of man and the establishment of a transfigured society.[57]

Political Science and the Representation of Order

Voegelin's "New Science of Politics" attempts a "restoration" of political science to a true science as a philosophy of history. He seeks to uncover the symbols "by which political societies interpret themselves as representatives of a transcendent truth."[58] That we can know, in part, that transcendent realm which is the basis of the order of the world is a given. The truthful, empirically based account of the structure of reality is his task--the "retheoretization" of philosophy and political science.[59]

Voegelin perceives three critical and revolutionary epochs in man's political history: 1) the foundation of political science through Plato and Aristotle; 2) St. Augustine's Civitas Dei marking the Roman/Christian crisis; and 3) Hegel's philosophy of law and history marking the first major earthquake of the Western crisis.[60]

All the early empires understood themselves as representatives of a transcendent order, the order of the cosmos. These were thus the cosmological empires. The empire was a "cosmic analogue," and the festivals and sacrifices were "cosmic liturgy, a symbolic participation of the cosmion in the cosmos."[61]

The discovery of the truth that challenged the cosmological empires was an historical event of major dimensions--an "axis period" in

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[57] NSP, p. 152.

[58] NSP, p. 1.

[59] NSP, pp. 4-5.

[60] NSP, p. 2.

[61] NSP, p. 54.

Toynbee's thought--a process of revelation from 800 to 300 B.C. occurring simultaneously (but in varying degrees of truth) in various civilizations: in China, Confucius and Lao-tse; in India, the Upanishads and Buddha; in Persia, Zoroastrianism; in Israel, the prophets; in Hellas, the philosphers and tragedy.[62] The new truth was that society is more than cosmic truth. It was the anthropological principle:

> A political society in existence will have to be an ordered cosmion, but not at the price of man; it should be not only a microcosmos but also a macroanthropos.[63]

This principle made possible the interpretation of and critique of the social order. "The true order of man, thus, is a constitution of the soul . . . ."[64]

The new truth is pitted against the truth of the older myth--the cosmological society. In this truth, "the psyche itself is found as a new center in man at which he experiences himself as open toward transcendent reality."[65] This experience is "the opening of the soul," a pivotal concept of Voegelin, which becomes a new authority in history. The anthropological principle is coupled with a second principle: "God is the Measure" (Plato) in opposition to the Protagorean "Man is the measure."[66] The new measure of society's critique is not man himself but man open to divine truth.

With the coming of Christianity, a third type of truth appears. To the cosmological truth represented by early empires and the anthropological truth appearing in the political culture of Athens is added the soteriological truth appearing in Christianity.[67]

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[62] NSP, p. 60.

[63] NSP, p. 61.

[64] NSP, p. 63.

[65] NSP, p. 67.

[66] NSP, p. 68.

[67] NSP, p. 77.

> The experience of mutuality in the relation with God, of the amicitia in the Thomistic sense, of the grace which imposes a supernatural form on the nature of man, is the specific difference of Christian truth.[68]

Early Christianity had three forms of theology: not only "natural theology" and "supernatural theology" but also "civil theology." Christianity was a threat to the existing Roman civil theology; and so, the fall of Rome in A.D. 410 started propaganda that the fall was the revenge of the gods for the Christian insult to Rome's civil religion.[69] St. Augustine could not understand, says Voegelin, the Roman experience: "the inseparable community of gods and men in the historically concrete civitas, the simultaneousness of human and divine institution of a social order."[70] For Augustine the order of existence was separated into the civitas terrena and the civitas coelestis.

Christianity was a legitimate threat to Roman imperial theology. The "revolutionary substance" in Christianity was its "uncompromising, radical de-divinization of the world."[71] Celsus accurately saw the danger. Christianity's radical monotheism was "the language of sedition,"[72]

> . . . a sedition against the divinity which harmoniously animates the whole world in all its subdivisions. And since the various quarters of the earth were from the beginning allotted to various ruling spirits and superintending principalities, the religious sedition is at the same time a political revolt.[73]

The belief that Christianity could be used to bolster the political theology of the Empire "was destined to experience a quick disappointment."[74] Augustine was left to pick up the pieces and redefine civil theology. In Voegelin's words, here was Augustine's resolution of the crisis, the "end" of political theology in orthodox Christianity:

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[68] NSP, p. 78.

[69] NSP, p. 86.

[70] NSP, p. 88.

[71] NSP, p. 100.

[72] NSP, pp. 100-101.

[73] NSP, p. 101.

[74] NSP, p. 102.

> The spiritual destiny of man in the Christian sense cannot be represented on earth by the power organization of a political society; it can be represented only by the church. The sphere of power is radically de-divinized; it has become temporal.[75]

In short, the belief in Christ's conquering of the principalities and powers destroyed the structure of civil theology.

The Rise of Gnosticism

The victory of Christianity resulted therefore in the "de-divinization" of the temporal sphere of power, a portentous event because our modern political problems concern attempts at "re-divinization." "De-divinization" is:

> . . . the historical process in which the culture of polytheism died from experiential atrophy, and human existence in society became reordered through the experience of man's destination by the grace of the world-transcendent God, toward eternal life in beatific vision.[76]

"Re-divinization," exemplified in modern political mass movement, has its origins in those "heretical" components of Christianity: Jewish apocalypticism and Gnosticism. The book of Revelation represents a fatefully distorted Parousia theology: "the revolutionary annunciation of the millienium in which Christ would reign with his saints on this earth."[77] Augustine solved the problem well, according to Voegelin, by interpreting the millienium as the reign of Christ in his Church. In this solution, which lasted until the late Middle Ages, the "revolutionary expectations of a Second Coming that would transfigure the structure of history on earth was ruled out as 'ridiculous.'" Here was the true

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[75] NSP, p. 106.

[76] NSP, p. 107.

[77] NSP, p. 108.

Christian solution:

> The Logos had become flesh in Christ; the grace of redemption had been bestowed on man; there would be no divinization of society beyond the pneumatic presence of Christ in his Church.[78]

Therefore, the civil order of society was seen as part of the temporal order which passes away. The "Roman Empire" became the symbol of the last temporal realm before the end of the world.[79] A de-divinized world began to search for re-divinization.

The movement of re-divinization found early expression in the late Middle Ages in Joachim of Flora who broke with the Augustinian conception of Christian society by applying the symbols of the Trinity to the course of history: the first age of the Father whose leader was Abraham; the second age of the Son whose leader was Christ; and the third age of the Spirit whose leader, the *dux e Babylone*, was thought to appear by A.D. 1260. Joachim's trinitarian eschatology created the "aggregate of symbols which govern the self-interpretation of modern political society to this day."[80]

The first of the symbols which have emerged from Joachim is of *history as a sequence of three ages*, the third age being the final Third Realm. Examples are: Comte's theory of the theological, metaphysical and scientific ages; Hegel's three phases of freedom and self-reflective spiritual fulfillment; the Marxian three stage dialectic of primitive communism, class society and final communism; Russia's "Third Rome"; and, the National Socialist symbol of the Third Reich.[81] The second symbol is that of "*leader*." St. Francis was seen by some to be Joachim's "leader."

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[78] *NSP*, p. 109.

[79] *NSP*, p. 110.

[80] *NSP*, p. 111.

[81] *NSP*, p. 112.

Other examples are the supermen of Comte and Marx. The third symbol, "the prophet of the new age," stands for the gnostic prophet or intellectual. The fourth symbol is the "brotherhood of autonomous persons"; the third age will transform men into members of the new realm without the sacramental mediation of grace. The Church will cease to exist because it is not needed. According to Voegelin, Hitler's millenial prophecy of the Third Realm derives from Joachimite speculation mediated through the Anabaptist wing of the Reformation and through the Johannine Christianity of Fichte, Hegel and Schelling.[82]

Voegelin draws out the great contrast between the Joachimite philosophy of history whose new eschatology "decisively affects the structure of modern politics"[83] and the Augustinian "defeatist" philosophy of history that saw profane history not growing toward fulfillment but only growing old.[84] Joachim's new eschatology is and of itself was not dangerous; it still remained Christian since it maintained a stress on the transcendental nature of the "irruption of the spirit." However, in the eighteenth century, the new age, on the path "from humanism to enlightenment," became a completely intramundane phenomenon. This second phase of "immanentization" Voegelin called "secularization."[85]

"Immanentization" is the gnostic error. It can take three paths: 1) teleological immanentization which issues in movement toward final perfection, or a progressivist interpretation of history; 2) axiological immanentization which posits the state of perfection, i.e., utopianism; or 3) activist mysticism in which a state of perfection is to be achieved through a revolutionary transfiguration of the nature of man, for example, Marxism.[86] While immanentization may take political right or left wings the third path tends to form violent left-wing action toward complete realization of the perfect realm.[87] All three paths are examples of the "fallacious immanentization of the Christian eschaton."[88]

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[82] NSP, p. 113. [83] NSP, p. 117. [84] NSP, p. 118.

[85] NSP, p. 119. Voegelin believes that the effects of Joachim's eschatology are minimized as long as the transcendent realm is preserved. America and England are much better off than Europe and Russia because the former nations experienced their gnostic revolutions while the eschatology was still "Christian." The latter's gnostic revolutions occurred after the eschatology had become secularized. See pp. 188ff.

Why is Christian culture so vulnerable to Gnosticism? Voegelin answers that the fallacy is set up by the insecurity Christianity causes through its de-divinization and the destruction of a "world full of gods." In Christianity all that connects man with the transcendent is the "tenuous bond of faith." As the Christian circle grows large, many find the heroic life of faith too difficult and fall from faith. The fall lands the person in the familiar gnostic heresy.

> The attempt at immanentizing the meaning of existence is fundamentally an attempt at bringing our knowledge of transcendence into a firmer grip than the *cognitio fidei*, the cognition of faith, will afford . . . .[89]

Gnosis offers this firmer grip in various ways: intellectual gnosis--the speculative penetration of the mystery, as for example in Hegel; emotional gnosis--the indwelling of divine substance in the human soul as in paracletic sectarians; or 3) volitional gnosis--the activist redemption of man and society, as for example in Comte, Marx, and Hitler.

These gnostic experiences are at the core of the re-divinization of society, for these men fall from faith and grasp at "more massive modes of participation in divinity," divinizing themselves in the process. The examples are many; for "the essence of modernity is the growth of gnosticism."[90] Secularism is radical immanentization, as is scientism, the gnostic schemes of salvation through physics, economics, sociology, biology, and psychology.

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[86] *NSP*, pp. 120-121.

[87] *NSP*, p. 175.

[88] *NSP*, p. 121.

[89] *NSP*, p. 124.

Voegelin's Science, Politics, and Gnosticism[91] further illustrates his analysis of the gnostic character of modernity. Gnosticism in its origins tried to meet along with Christianity and other hellenistic philosophies and mystery religions the crisis of the "ecumenic age": a reduction of man to a "state of forlornness in the turmoil of the world, of intellectual disorientation, of material and spiritual insecurity."[92] The central element of Gnosticism was and is:

> . . . the experience of the world as an alien place into which man has strayed and from which he must find his way back home to the other world of his origin.[93]

The world is no longer the "well-ordered" cosmos or the good creation of God. Man "having been flung" seeks escape. Gnostic self-salvation aims at "the destruction of the old world and passage to the new."[94] The gnostic attempt at world destruction will not destroy the world but will only increase the disorder. True political order is based upon acknowledgment of the transcendent source of being and order, realized in the "opening of the soul."[95] This quest of inspired reason for the source of order is prohibited by gnosis. The nature of gnostic speculation is:

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[90] NSP, p. 126.

[91] Eric Voegelin, Science, Politics and Gnosticism (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1968); hereafter designated SPG.

[92] SPG, p. 8.

[93] SPG, p. 9.

[94] SPG, p. 11.

[95] SPG, p. 18.

> . . . the symbolic expression of an anticipation of salvation in which the power of being replaces the power of God and the parousia of being the Parousia of Christ.[96]

Political science has as its task the exorcising of the "demons" of Gnosticism.[97]

Gnosticism is exemplified by the forbidding of true rational questioning and by the "Murder of God."[98] The arch-gnostic Hegel is a prime example as he moved from philosophy to gnosis.[99] Among the "Gnostic Mass Movements" of our time, the "ersatz religions," Voegelin includes progressivism, positivism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, Communism, fascism, and national socialism.[100] There are six elements by which we can recognize gnostic mass movements:[101]

1) dissatisfaction with one's situation;

2) the belief that the drawbacks of the situation can be attributed to the facts that the world is intrinsically poorly organized;

3) belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible;

4) the belief that the order of being will have to be changed in an historical process; in contrast the "Christian solution" is "that the world throughout history will remain as it is and that _man's salvational fulfillment is brought about through grace in death_";[102]

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[96] _SPG_, p. 48.

[97] _SPG_, p. 49.

[98] _SPG_, pp. 13-75, Chapters One and Two.

[99] _SPG_, pp. 77ff. Voegelin got his cue that Hegel and German Idealism were gnostic from F. C. Baur; _SPG_, p. 3.

[100] _SPG_, pp. 81-114.

[101] _SPG_, pp. 86ff.

[102] _SPG_, p. 87; emphasis mine.

5) the belief that a change in the order of being lies in the realm of human action, that this salvational act is possible through man's own effort;

6) the construction of a formula for self and world salvation.

The gnostic error is clear. It abandons transcendence and endows "man and his intramundane range of action with the meaning of eschatological fulfillment."[103] Such gnostic activism contradicts the "life of the spirit" which is the true source of order in the world.[104] Therefore gnosticism is self-defeating and totalitarian; "the existential rule of Gnostic activists," becomes the "end form of progressive civilization."[105]

The English Puritans provide Voegelin with a case study for gnostic revolution. Seen through the eyes of a contemporary, Thomas Hooker, the Puritan gnostics are contrasted by Voegelin with the Classical/Christian tradition as represented by Hooker. The Puritans mistakenly tried to apply the perfection of God's realm to the world of politics:

> The Saint is a Gnostic who will not leave the transfiguration of the world to the grace of God beyond history but will do the work of God himself, right here and now, in history.[106]

For the Puritan cause, the old world which is totally corrupt must be destroyed so that the new world can be ushered in. Voegelin compares the Puritan vision to the later Gnostic vision of the dictatorship of the proletariat![107]

The problem of public order created by the Puritans was answered by Thomas Hobbes. The key problem is the tension between two truths:

> On the one hand, there is a political society that wants to maintain its established order in historical existence; on the other hand,

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[103] NSP, op. cit., p. 129. [104] NSP, p. 131.

[105] NSP, p. 132. [106] NSP, p. 147. [107] NSP, p. 149.

> there are private individuals within society who want to change the public order, if necessary by force, in the name of a new truth. Hobbes solved the conflict by deciding that there was no public truth except the law of peace and concord in a society; any opinion or doctrine conducive to discord was thereby proved untrue.[108]

Therefore, Hobbes tried to establish Christianity as an English civil theology and ignored in the process the "truth of the soul."[109] Voegelin wants to maintain a distinction between the opening of the soul and the structure of reality "which remains unchanged."[110] The tension between the "truth of the soul" and the "truth of society" cannot be eliminated by throwing out one or the other. Human existence is not different from what it was before the opening of the soul unveiled the destiny "beyond nature." Faith is only the *anticipation* of the supernatural perfection of man. "*The realm of God is not of this world*; and the representation of the *civitas Dei* in history, the church, is not a substitute for civil society."[111] In other words, the two truths must exist side by side, not being confused and not being replaced one by the other. The Church Fathers, so Voegelin perceives, erred by not retaining the tension. "Apparently, they did not understand that Christianity could supercede polytheism but not abolish the need of a civil theology."[112] Hobbes correctly saw the need of a civil theology--this was the achievement of his *Leviathan*--but he denied the tension between the civil truth and the truth of the soul by denying the validity of the latter. The Puritan civil war was caused by groups so "heaven-bent on having the public order represent the right variety of transcendent truth" that the existential order of society was in danger.[113] England needed to rediscover Plato's truth,

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[108] *NSP*, p. 153.

[109] *NSP*, p. 156.

[110] *NSP*, p. 157.

[111] *NSP*, p. 157; emphasis mine.

[112] *NSP*, p. 158.

[113] *NSP*, p. 162.

> . . . that society must exist as an ordered cosmion, as a representative of cosmic order, before it can indulge in the luxury of also representing a truth of the soul. To represent the truth of the soul in the Christian sense is the function of the church, not of civil society.[114]

Gnostics refuse to acknowledge the "Aeschylean polis with its ordering Dike," as an "island in a sea of demonic disorder . . . ."[115] They identify the dream and reality as a principle. They respond to the "constraints of reality" by a variety of "magic operations":

> . . . moral condemnation, declarations of intention, resolutions, appeals to the opinion of mankind, branding of enemies as aggressors, outlawing of war, propaganda for world peace and world government, etc.[116]

In addition, Gnostic politicians "have put the Soviet army on the Elbe, surrendered China to the Communists, at the same time demilitarized Germany and Japan, and in addition demobilized our own army."[117]

Voegelin contends that Hobbes countered the Puritan immanentization of the eschaton which endangered existence with "a radical immanence of existence which denied the eschaton."[118] Hobbes denied the truth of the soul as a motivation, interpreting Puritan zeal merely as lust for power. Ironically, Hobbes' solution becomes the Gnostic fate:

> Hence the Leviathan is the symbol of the fate that actually will befall the Gnostic activists when in their dream they believe they realize the realm of freedom.[119]

Our exposition has presented Voegelin's major thesis of the gnostic character of modern thought and politics. Also, we have shown his method of political re-theoretization via the rational quest through the opening of the soul to the transcendent source of order. His thesis on Gnosticism and political thought fits securely into his philosophy of history.

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[114] NSP, p. 162. [115] NSP, p. 167. [116] NSP, p. 120.

[117] NSP, p. 172. [118] NSP, p. 179. [119] NSP, p. 187.

Christianity and the History of Order

Voegelin's Order and History is an extraordinarily rich and encompassing work. In it Voegelin delineates the role of Christianity in the movement of order in history which emerges from the history of order.[120] In the history of order these principal types of order have emerged: 1) the imperial organization of the Ancient Near East and their existence in the form of the cosmological myth; 2) the Chosen People and its existence in historical form (Israel); 3) the polis and its myth and the development of philosophy as the symbolic form of order; 4) the multi-civilizational empires since Alexander and the development of Christianity; 5) the modern national states and the development of Gnosis as the symbolic form of order.[121]

In Israel and Revelation, Volume One of Order and History, Voegelin analyzes the new historical form of existence created by God in the Hebrew people. Israel was led out of "cosmological" existence into "historical" existence in the Exodus. The "truth of the soul" was being differentiated from the truth of society. According to Voegelin, the covenant ideal representing the transcendent realm was to be borne in the psyche, or soul, and not externalized into legal or political forms. The prophets represented a heightened form of revelation, but they made a "gnostic" error "derailing" prophetism into "a constitution for the kingdom of Judah."[122] Through this volume, Voegelin interprets the kingdom of God in extremely individualistic and other-worldly terms and argues against the danger of "theopolity," the promoting of a kingdom of God on earth, which represents a prototype of Gnosticism.

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[120] Order and History, I, Israel and Revelation, op. cit., p. ix; hereafter designated IR.

[121] IR, p. x.

Voegelin's treatment of Isaiah is indicative of his theological perspective. Isaiah sought to impose the transcendent ideal onto the political realm. He represents a "leap out of existence"; for, the "autonomous order of this world remains what it is."[123] Voegelin uses the term "metastasis" to mean the attempt to transfigure historical existence according to the transcendent kingdom of God. He asserts:

> The will to transform reality into something which by essence it is not is the rebellion against the nature of things as ordained by God.[124]

Voegelin makes clear that the prophetic impulse to transform history in accord with the kingdom of God is the error later amplified in Gnosticism. This point may be the inner theme of Israel and Revelation. Indeed, in its preface, Voegelin maintained that,

> . . . the "prophetic conception of a change in the constitution of being lies at the root of our contemporary beliefs in the perfection of society, either through progress or through a communist revolution.[125]

Voegelin's second and third volumes, The Polis and Plato and Aristotle[126] illustrate his commitment to classic philosophy's view of truth. The "common noetic core" of Greek philosophy and Christianity constitutes his canon of truth. While Christianity represents a step beyond Plato and Aristotle, the latter are necessary as a noetic control on Christianity's vulnerability to Gnosticism. The common noetic core and experience is the apprehension of life in the "Metaxy" (Plato's term), or "In-Between," between the historical realm and the transcendent realm, between the imperfect and the perfect realms. The opening of the soul perceives this truth and seeks to maintain the tension between the two realms in the soul.

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[122] IR, p. 429. [123] IR, p. 452. [124] IR, p. 453.

[125] IR, p. xiii; see the incisive critique of IR by Bernhard W. Anderson, "Politics and the Transcendent," The Political Science Reviewer, I (Fall, 1971), pp. 1-29; Anderson criticizes Voegelin for making the kingdom of God too otherworldly and too individualistic.

[126] Op. cit.

In Volume four, The Ecumenic Age, Voegelin has changed to a new perception of history as moving not in a story line from beginning to its happy or unhappy end but rather a "mystery in process of revelation."[127] The subject of the volume, "the Ecumenic Age" is that historical period extending from the rise of Persia to the fall of Rome, the era of Christian and gnostic beginnings. The Christian/gnostic relationship is further elucidated in this volume. Gnosis is a threat when God's presence, as in Christ, becomes luminous. The problem is the relationship of the intensely experienced presence of the "Beyond" to the "Beginning":

> When the formerly unknown god of the Beyond reveals himself as the goal of the eschatological movement in the soul, the existence of the cosmos becomes an ever more disturbing mystery. Why should a cosmos exist at all, if man can do no better than live in it as if he were not of it, in order to make his escape from the prison through death?[128]

Here lies also the gnostic question since the gnostic inclination is to tear the movement toward the Beyond out from the context of reality. The Gnostic seeks thereby to expand the consciousness of the Beyond to comprehend the Beginning. (In Christian theology we would say the order or doctrine of Redemption has swallowed or eclipsed the order or doctrine of Creation.) The gnostic psychodrama of fall and redemption is created: a game of liberation deriving from an intensively experienced alienation and revolt against it. The Gnostic inverts the relation of the Beginning and the Beyond, disregarding the "contextual structure of reality." Voegelin considers the "epiphany of Christ" the great "catalyst" that made "eschatological consciousness" an historical force "both in forming and deforming humanity."[129] The presence of Jewish apocalyptic in Christian tradition also helps make Gnosticism a perennial threat to Christianity. Plato provides a necessary control on apocalytic by keeping the theophanic event in balance with the "experience of the cosmos":

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[127] The Ecumenic Age, op. cit., p. 6; hereafter designated EA.

[128] EA, p. 19.

> He did not permit enthusiastic expectations to distort the human condition . . . . In sum, Plato did not allow the theophanic event to grow into the apocalyptic "great mountain that filled the whole world" (Daniel 2:35).[130]

When Voegelin needs a representative of the Christian truth in The Ecumenic Age, he selects not Jesus and his message, but rather Paul. The epiphany of Christ is epitomized by Paul's "vision of the Resurrected." This vision convinced Paul "that man is destined to rise to immortality if he opens himself to the divine pneuma as Jesus did."[131] The theophanic event causes turbulence as existential consciousness and the structure of reality conflict. Gnostics turn this turbulence of the God-man encounter into violence between men:

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[129] EA, p. 20. [130] EA, p. 237. [131] EA, p. 242.

> In the imaginary reality of the ideologists, this killing of men in revolutionary action is supposed to produce the much desired transfiguration, or metastatic change of the nature of man as an event in history.[132]

Marx's notion of revolutionary killing as Blutrausch, a "blood-intoxication" which renders us supermen is an example: "The magic of the Blutrausch is the ideological equivalent to the promise of the Pauline vision of the Resurrected."[133] The "new Christs" of Comte, Hegel and Marx constitute a misreading of Paul's vision of the theophanic event. Herein is the problem of "transfiguration in historical consciousness."[134]

Voegelin calls that nineteenth century movement which rejected theophanic reality and set up the new Christs "the egophanic revolt." Egophany is a symbol which expresses "the pathos of thinkers who exist in a state of alienation and libidinous obsession."[135] The turbulence of theophany gives way to the revolution of egophany. Transcendence is abandoned, e.g., Comte's scientific era, and transfiguration is intended for history, the Parousia being forced into history.[136]

In Voegelin's mind, Hegel is the "egophanic manipulator par excellence" of the Pauline vision of the Resurrected. Since Paul's parousia hope was not fulfilled and the envisioned transfiguration did not happen, Gnostics substituted in its place schemes of immanentizing the eschaton. Hegel committed his egophanic error "by identifying revelation with a dialectical process of consciousness in history."[137]

For Voegelin there is an absolute distinction between the gnostic (and apocalyptic) consciousness in which the world beyond repair will be healed by a divine intervention in history to transfigure history and, on the other hand, the "healing epiphany of Christ" which unveils a different kind of transfiguration in progress in an *untransfigured* history.[138] History is made real and given meaning through those openings of the soul which point man beyond history.[138] This orientation of man beyond history, according to Voegelin, makes history eschatological.[140]

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[132] EA, p. 253. [133] EA, pp. 253-254. [134] EA, p. 254.

[135] EA, p. 260. [136] EA, pp. 260-262. [137] EA, p. 268.

We now see more clearly Voegelin's theological assumptions. God is the Creator of the unchangeable character of history. The transcendent realm grounds the order of human society. However, the visions of the transcendent perfect realm must not be confused with historical reality; neither can the former be forced upon the latter. The tension between the two realities or truths must be borne in the life of the soul. If we try to apply the truth of the soul to society we become gnostic immanentizers of the eschaton. The intensity of the Christian theophanic event symbolized in Paul's "vision of the Resurrected" can be dangerous if the transfiguration promised to Christians is applied to the historical political realm. We now perceive his theistic dualism more clearly. The transcendent realm and the historical realm are distinct even though the latter is grounded in the former. Belief in the transformation of history is gnostic delusion.

The Gospel and the Kingdom: Christ Separated from the "Powers"

Voegelin's positive statement of the essence of the Christian gospel is most concisely stated in his essay "The Gospel and Culture."[141]

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[138] *EA*, p. 302. [139] *EA*, p. 304. [140] *EA*, p. 304.

[141] Eric Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture" in *Jesus and Man's*

The Christian Gospel is an answer to the question of the meaning of life and death. As we live in the "In-Between," we search for this meaning. The "Saving Tale of Incarnation, Death and Resurrection" is the gospel's answer.[142] The "common noetic core" of classical philosophy and Christianity concerns the life in the "Metaxy" of pulls and counter pulls. In the "extraordinary divine eruption" in Jesus,"[143] the "Unknown God" is revealed and the mystery of life and death is illuminated. Jesus does not represent the beginning of the mystery of divine presence in existence but rather its "full comprehension and enactment."[144] The key to Jesus' message according to Voegelin, is his teaching on the mystery of gaining and losing of life (Mt. 16:24-26):

> In the In-Between of existence, man is faced with the choice of denying his Self and the Devil or denying Jesus and the Unknown God.[145]

Voegelin draws most of all from the Johannine gospel in his exposition of Jesus' teaching, particularly Chapter 12 ("unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth . . . ." etc.). John's images of existence match the "pull of the golden cord" in the classical vision of truth. Jesus' death is the "pathos of representative death,"[146] a decisive moment in the understanding of the meaning of life and death, death in life and life in death. Here is the core of the Gospel.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, Voegelin's Christianity is a mystical kind of religion emphasizing the individual's inspired

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Hope, Vol. II, Donald G. Miller and Dikran Y. Hadidian, eds. (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971); hereafter designated GC.

[142] GC, p. 77. [143] GC, p. 80. [144] GC, p. 93.

[145] GC, p. 96. [146] GC, p. 95.

cognition of the meaning of life and death. Earlier key phrases were "salvation fulfillment . . . brought about through grace in death," "mutuality in the relation with God," "the pneumatic presence of Christ in his Church," and "the experience of man's destination by the grace of the world-transcendent God, toward eternal life in beatific vision." Jesus' Gospel is not political; God's kingdom is not of this world. Jesus' fondness for the plain and poor people has nothing to do with economics or politics but "judges the kingdom of God more easily accessible to the 'poor' . . . ."[147] In Voegelin's words, "the kingdom of God will have no social organization or ruling class in the world."[148]

The millennial expectations of Judaism and Christianity lead, as explained above, to the derailment of Christianity into Gnosticism. Cromwell, Lenin and Marx are appropriate successors of the Angel of the Lord in Revelation 20.[149] The Christian gospel desacralized the cosmos by destroying the intra-cosmic gods. Apocalypticism and Gnosticism take this truth too far.[150] The "strength" of the Gospel lies here:

> That the truth of reality has its center not in the cosmos at large, not in nature or society or imperial rulership, but in the presence of the Unknown God in a man's existence to his death and life.[151]

Summary

Voegelin's theological position can now be summarized:

1) Voegelin's Gospel is the mystical apprehension of the meaning of life and death experienced as an anticipation of what happens at death through grace.

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[147] GC, p. 99. [148] GC, p. 99. [149] GC, p. 97.

[150] GC, p. 100. [151] GC, p. 99.

2) In the "Gospel Movement" the cosmos is desacralized and the intra-cosmic gods are destroyed, as the truth of the soul is "differentiated" from the truth of the cosmos. Life keeps its meaning only through the heroic venture of faith.

3) Christianity breeds gnostic corruption as it de-divinizes the cosmos and undermines civil theology. The turbulence of the tension between man and God, imperfect history and the perfect transcendence must not lead to a revolutionary attempt to apply the perfect to the imperfect. Gnosticism is the fateful attempt at such a re-divinization. The tension is borne in man's soul.

4) The new truth of the soul found in the Gospel must not be torn asunder from the world created by the Unknown God. Voegelin maintains a kind of dualism, a "shaft driven" between the reality of the cosmos and the transcendent realm. Even though the cosmos has its foundation and order in the transcendent (thus avoiding absolute cosmological dualism), which we can know in part, the ideals and vision of the realm of God must not, cannot, be applied to the world. The telos or eschatological future of man and the world lies beyond history which cannot change. Transfiguration of man and society is a dangerous, if not fatal, illusion. It is the gnostic attempt at immanentizing the eschaton.

Voegelin and Conservative Thought

We may now ask about the congeniality of Voegelin's philosophy with conservative political thought.

1) First of all they share a fervent antipathy toward utopianism of all shapes and sizes, an almost religious anti-Communism and anti-revolutionary posture.

2) They share a view of history that stresses its continuous character. If it is not a cyclical view of history, it is one which will not change its character.

3) They share a dualism of a finite unchanging "sinful" historical realm and a perfect transcendent realm of God. The "City of Man" has its own religious justification in its ordering function. The "City of God" is a distinct realm not to be confused with the "City of Man." Thus they share a "realism" about society that relies on its tragic continuities. Society is the realm of law and order preserving itself by the use of superior power over the forces of disorder. Order is its primary social virtue. They share an affinity toward the Augustinian dualist solution, though they would probably disagree with Augustine's view of the "commingling" of the two cities. Their dualism therefore has the paradoxical combination of a civil religion which divinized its order and a civil cynicism which denies redemption of that order.

4) They share a "pessimistic" anthropology that questions perfectionism and any scheme of redemption of the character of man within history. Their cynicism derives from their "realism" about man.

CONCLUSION

Within the language of this dissertation, Voegelin's position on Christ and the "powers" can be termed: God of the "powers" and Christ separated from the "powers." Although God created the world and the transcendent realm grounds the realm of historical order, there is a clear separation of the historical and transcendent realms. Any tension between the two realms is borne in the soul of man. In the historical realm the primary good is order. God is the protector of the cosmic order and as such is a God of the "powers." Voegelin sees the necessity of a "civil theology" which grounds historical order in the Divine. In his mind the Christian de-divinization of the "powers" was a fateful move creating a vacuum into which Gnosticism appeared to sow seeds of destruction. Even though Voegelin grounds the historical realm in the transcendent, thus making God a God of the "powers," he carefully separates the two realms. The transcendent realm of truth revealed in Jesus Christ, among others, is a truth to be borne in the soul, not to be applied to society. The kingdom of God is not of this world; the teachings of Christ reflect the beatific vision; Paul's "Vision of the Resurrected" is a glimpse of the telos beyond history. The values of Christ, then, are not relevant to the "powers." Any attempt to apply them is the gnostic immanentization of the eschaton. "Last things" are to remain last things. Hence we observe in Voegelin a God of the "powers" and a Christ separated from the "powers."

Voegelin's thought may be analyzed according to our four theological motifs.

Eschatology and the "powers." For Voegelin, eschatology is man's movement toward a destination in the "Beyond." It is a spiritual, otherworldly reality. History itself does not move toward fulfillment in history. To say so is the error of "teleological immanentization." Man, society, the realm of politics and "powers" will not be transfigured. Apocalyptic visions of such transformation are unfortunate inclusions in the Christian canon. History is open and not mechanically cyclic, but it will not change its basic character. The hope for historical transfiguration is gnostic.

Christ as Lord of the "powers." In Voegelin's thought the "Unknown God" who created the world is the Lord over the "powers" as an ordering and preserving Lord. There must be such a "civil theology"; the "powers" must be seen as mediators of God's Order. The polis, the nation or the empire is a "dike" defending man against the demonic powers of disorder.

However, even though Voegelin advocates a civil theology, he carefully separates the realm of God and the realm of history, the truth of the soul and the truth of society. For that reason Voegelin liked the early Christian tripartite division of theology: natural theology, supernatural theology and civil theology. The arenas are separate. The transcendent cannot be imposed upon the historical. The "constraints" of reality or of the truth of society (civil theology) prohibit the application of the realm of perfection to history.

Voegelin can be interpreted this way. God the Creator is Lord of the "powers." Paul's passage in Romans 13:1-7 taken in isolation would be an appropriate picture. "Christ," however, represents the truth of the soul, a revealer of the God of Redemption. This Christ has nothing to do with the realm of the "powers," only with man's salvation through grace in death. His kingdom is not of this world. What we perceive in Voegelin is a split in the being of God. There is an ordering God of the "powers" and a redeeming God separated from the "powers." His dualism between the historical and transcendent realms reflects a dualism within the transcendent realm itself.

Voegelin can confess God the Creator "Lord of hosts" or "Lord of the powers," as the Septuagent translated the Hebrew. I perceive a difficulty, however, for Voegelin to confess Christ as Lord of the "powers." For to confess Christ Lord of the "powers" moves toward a

Christocentric civil theology. Christ's values and the values of the kingdom of God are then relevant to the life of the "powers." Christ's values are then applied to the historical realm. The "powers" are then measured by the plumb line of Jesus Christ. This confession prohibits a civil theology which rests only upon the ordering and preserving mandates of an Unknown God. To say Christ is Lord of the "powers" is to say God's creating, ordering and preserving power cannot be separated from his redeeming activity.

The solution to the Christian de-divinizing of the "powers" and the subsequent undermining of civil theology is not a return to a pre-Christian or generally religious civil theology which reduces civil theology to divine protection or order. Rather, it is the restructuring of civil theology taking normatively the values of Christ and thereby combining the creating, ordering, preserving and redeeming work of God.

Voegelin's interpretation of Gnosticism comes into focus at a crucial point concerning Christ's Lordship. One form of what may have been Gnosticism in Corinth announced the presently realized victory of the Cosmocrator over the "powers." The new age had come; the old age was abolished. In Christian gnosticism Christ was proclaimed the Cosmocrator and the eschaton was claimed to be fully realized. As in Corinth, this error could lead either to asceticism or antinomianism. In a political sense this error could lead to a divinizing of the civil realm or to a radical rebellion against it. Voegelin has as his main agenda the polemic against various modern forms of this gnostic error.

A second, later form of Gnosticism is that form which Hans Jonas interprets existentially in his noted work, The Gnostic

Religion.[152] Voegelin himself uses Jonas' work. In this form a major tenet is that the world is an alien world under the control of evil forces. The "powers" are under the control of the evil Cosmocrator. Gnostic redemption is an escape from this sphere of captivity into the spiritual realm. Christ cannot be the Lord over the "powers"; the realm of the "powers" is unredeemable. Voegelin uses this form of Gnosis to critique those who see the world as intrinsically evil or "poorly organized" and seek to devise a scheme of redemption. Gerhart Niemeyer, a conservative political philosopher and follower of Voegelin, calls this gnostic diagnosis and prescription, "total critique and total revolution,"[153] and identifies Marx and Lenin as Gnostics. At this point I question Voegelin's interpretation of modern Gnostics as those who seek to immanentize the eschaton and transform history. In the ancient gnostic schemes of redemption, the goal was not to transform the world but to escape it. Modern and ancient Gnostics as described by Voegelin may share the same existential consciousness of living in an evil world, but are not their respective solutions different? Is not to describe the gnostic error as the attempt to transform history or to immanentize the eschaton a distinct changing of the original meaning of Gnosticism, at least of the later form which Jonas describes existentially? I would make this judgment. Voegelin's use of Gnosticism is closer to the earlier enthusiastic Gnosis one form of which was probably present in Corinth. This form can be translated into a left-wing Gnosticism whick seeks to impose a utopian perfect realm on the historical realm. However, the later form of Gnosticism is more carefully translated into extreme right-wing Gnosticism which sees the world as bound in an evil conspiracy. Glen Stassen's cogent essay[154] shows how the radical right is an exemplary form of the modern gnostic heresy as described by Voegelin even though many extreme right-wingers invoke Voegelin to combat left-wing Gnosticism. For Voegelin both right and left wing Gnostics seek to overthrow the historical order (and the truth of society) and supplant it with the new perfect realm. While Voegelin's description of the modern movement is accurate, I wonder whether they can be called gnostic, especially as regards what Schmithals describes as the later form. It does have more affinity with the earlier, and in Schmithal's judgment truer, form of enthusiastic Gnosticism.[155]

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[152] Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion (Second ed.) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963). Jonas is criticized by Walter Schmithals (Gnosticism in Corinth, New York: Abingdon Press, 1971) for interpreting Gnosticism solely according to later forms of gnosis found in Mandaean and Manichaean texts, forms which have lost the "essential elements of the genuine Gnostic self-consciousness" (p. 27). Schmithals goes on to say: "Thus Jonas sets forth with emphasis the feeling of anxiety, the homesickness, the yearning for redemption, and the 'thrownness' of the Gnostic . . . . But the tremendous sense of freedom and victory on the part of the pneumatic person, who has overcome the hostile world, who is free from anxiety and care, who is satisfied and full of self-glorying, all this is treated much too lightly. And yet these latter features are really the self-consciousness of the genuine Gnostic, who knows himself . . . to be already perfect and complete while the cosmic dread with its consequences of various magical-mysterious assurances against the demons is a sign of the late period and the decay of Gnosticism" (pp. 27-28). The pertinence here of Schmithal's statement is not in his judgment whether the earlier or later forms of gnosticism are more authentic, but rather in his delineation of the two distinct forms.

[153] Gerhart Niemeyer, Between Nothingness and Paradise (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1971), pp. 76-102.

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[154] Glen Stassen, "Faith of the Radical Right and Biblical Faith" Review and Expositor, 65 (Summer, 1968), pp. 315-334.

[155] We do not want to become involved in the scholarly debate as to whether Corinthian enthusiasm should be called gnosticism with a little "g" or with a large "G," or whether it is gnosticism and/or enthusiasm. See above pp. 22-23; and Martin Hengel, Crucifixion

I ask one more question of Voegelin's gnostic theory of modern politics in relation to the motif of Christ as Lord of the "powers." Has Voegelin in the intensity of his battle with modern utopians actually rejected the transforming power of God within history and denied that Christ is Lord of the "powers"? Has his truth of society become an immutable truth invulnerable to the redemptive work of God? And, if this is true, has Voegelin not himself come close to a major tenet of ancient Gnosticism--that the material world has nothing to do with the spiritual realm of the good and perfect God? Has Voegelin's anti-gnostic labors not landed in another deterministic dualism?

The "powers" and fallenness. Voegelin eschews any scheme of "the Fall"; a fall/redemption scheme is gnostic because it applies an artificial scheme upon history. The realm of the "powers" is rooted in the transcendent and so is not fallen. However, they do not live by the truth of the perfect realm. Nevertheless, they will not be transfigured in history to reflect the perfect realm.

The "powers" and the demonic. Voegelin has his own demonology. The demonic is the gnostic dream which is identified with historical reality. The demonic is the immanentization of the truth of the soul, or the eschaton, or the realm of God. The demonic is the divinization of man and his work. Any attempt to bring the transcendent into history is demonic.

Eric Voegelin's philosophy has an omnivorous grasp driven by a polemical hunger. The world is not to be changed but to be interpreted.

(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 18. We do wish to define descriptively the problem of enthusiastic "realized eschatology," whether or not it can be called "Gnostic."

At this point he fervently opposes Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in their various ways; the point, however, is to change it."[156] "His" gospel centers upon the interpretation of the meaning of life and death and on the balancing of the tension in the soul between the truth of the soul and the truth of society. His God is a Creating, Ordering and Preserving God. His "Christ" is a revealer of the Unknown God's redemptive activity in the life of the soul and beyond history. The kingdom of God lies beyond history and will not change it. Berhard W. Anderson has cogently criticized Voegelin for making the kingdom of God too otherworldy and too individualistic.[157]

Voegelin's thesis on Gnosticism and politics is an important one. He correctly warns against the illusion of making anything finite in our world infinite or perfect. His definition of the demonic nature of the gnostic re-divinizing of our world is consonant with my definition presented in Chapter One.

My major criticism has to do with his own dualism. In some ways it is close to a gnostic tenet that the material world is unredeemable. His Unknown God functions in the world as primarily the God of Order. This God protects the status quo and present forms of injustice and resists change. The values of Christ or of the kingdom of God are certainly threatening to the status quo and Voegelin clearly wants to keep the tension (or "turbulence") at bay. Melvin Laird used Voegelin's work to defend his "hawk" military policy in the 1960's. A large military contingent was needed to reassert the "right order" of America in face of the disorder of Communism.[158] Voegelin's conservative dualism is the undialectical dualism which results in a cynicism concerning the historical realm. It is, in Reinhold Niebuhr's words, a "too consistent realism." Voegelin represents what a Niebuhrian dualism becomes if it collapses the tension between the transcendence and the relevance of the kingdom so that the kingdom is only transcendent and the values of Christ are not relevant to the "powers."

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[156] Eric Voegelin, From Enlightenment to Revolution, John H. Hollowell, ed. (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 276f.

[157] See n. 125. As an Old Testament scholar Anderson challenges Voegelin's interpretation of the kingdom of God in IR.

Voegelin's theological assumptions have been shown to be congenial to the conservative political position and to its battle against left and right-wing utopianism. My major question persists in the feeling of Voegelin's own modified form of gnosticism. In his thought the historical realm is not "evil." Indeed, it is grounded in the transcendance of a good Creator God. However, the historical realm is not redeemable and lives by a truth which is distinct from and never to be confused with the truth of the soul, or, of the kingdom of God. Has Voegelin not driven a wedge between God the Creator and God the Redeemer? To use European theological terminology, have not the orders of creation and preservation eclipsed the order of redemption? Voegelin is comfortable with the Unknown God who guards the order of history. He is less comfortable with the Redeemer God about whose kingdom Jesus preached and for whose kingdom he prayed, "Thy kingdom come _on_ _earth_ as it is in heaven."

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[158] See Max L. Stackhouse's analysis of Laird and Voegelin in his _The Ethics of Necropolis_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 84.

Chapter 5

THE THEOLOGY OF RESISTANCE: CHRIST AGAINST THE "POWERS"

The group of Christians in America who have most passionately raised the question concerning Christ and the principalities and powers are those who comprise the "Theology of Resistance." The turmoil of the 1960's and 1970's gave birth to this new theological voice. If the civil rights strife began to raise the issue of the evil nature of the "powers" in modern American society, the Vietnam war intensified the crisis. The optimistic days of the 1950's and early 1960's were brought to an abrupt halt by burning ghetto streets in America and napalmed villages in Vietnam. The signs of the times mocked the optimism and triumphalism of the latest theological wave, secular and radical theology. The early 1960's had looked promising. A Pope named John was in Rome, a President named John was in Washington and the Secular City was galloping toward the New Jerusalem.[1] But the civil rights and war crises ended the celebration.

Resistance Theology became one important theological response to this crisis period in American life. Included in this group are William Stringfellow, Daniel and Phillip Berrigan, James Douglass,

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[1] See Gary Wills' Catholic memoirs of the 1960's and '70's in his Bare Ruined Choirs (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1972), particularly Chapter Four, "The Two Johns: Rome and the Secular City."

Jacques Ellul, Will Campbell and James Holloway.[2] Since this theological voice is so young and since there is no one person who gives a systematic or wholistic presentation of its theology, a fair representation requires that we look at three of them: Jacques Ellul, William Stringfellow and Daniel Berrigan. Jacques Ellul has had an immense influence on this theology, and so even though he is a Frenchman, his thought should be studied. Few examples can illustrate the contrast between secular theology and Resistance Theology more vividly than Ellul's The Meaning of the City and Harvey Cox's The Secular City. We shall begin then with an exposition of Ellul's sociological and theological analysis of Christ and the "powers." Next I shall concentrate on William Stringfellow's theology of the "powers." He is an articulate Episcopal lay theologian and lawyer whose life style and thought are clear expressions of the Theology of Resistance. Finally, as an evocative illustration of the Theology of Resistance, we shall conclude with a study of Daniel Berrigan's "theopoetic" praxis.[3]

JACQUES ELLUL

Jacques Ellul's influence on the Theology of Resistance is profound. He is a professor of History and Sociology of Institutions in the faculty of Law and Economic Sciences at the University of Bordeaux. Ellul, "not brought up in an especially Christian family," became at nineteen an enthusiastic Marxist but around age twenty-two was converted "with a certain brutality" to the Christian faith. He has written around twenty-six books, about half in sociology and history and the other half on theological and biblical themes. He is theologically a Barthian whose life work is to supply the sociological pole to Barth's dialectical theology. Ellul describes his method as "composition in counterpoint" in which his sociological analysis is "answered (not in the sense of replying, but in that of noting the other dialectical pole) by a biblical or theological analysis."[4] His sociological investigations provide empirical foundation for his theological positions. Because of the restriction of space I shall summarize only his theological perspective.

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[2] James W. Douglass, Resistance and Contemplation (New York: A Delta Book, 1972); Will Campbell and James Holloway are leaders of The Committee of Southern Churchmen whose journal is called Katallagete: Be Ye Reconciled; see also Campbell and Holloway's Up To Our Steeples in Politics (New York: Paulist Press, 1970) and Introducing Jacques Ellul, James Holloway, ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1970). Two noted men who have contributed to this theological perspective but who probably could not be placed firmly within it are Thomas Merton, Faith and Violence (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968) and John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1972).

[3] To borrow a phrase from Amos Wilder, Theopoetic: Theology

The Eschatological Battle with the "Powers"

Ellul's theological ethic is radically eschatological. In his first theological work published in English, The Presence of the Kingdom, we see the seminal basis of all his theological writings. In it he lays out the groundwork of the eschatological life of the Christian. The Christian is to be *in* the world but not *of* it.[5] We find in Ellul the

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and the Religious Imagination (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

[4] Jacques Ellul, "Mirror of These Ten Years," The Christian Century LXXXVIII (Feb. 18, 1970), pp. 200-201. For example, his The Political Illusion is answered by The Politics of Man and the Politics of God, The Technological Society is answered by The Meaning of the City.

[5] The Presence of the Kingdom (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967; French ed., 1948), pp. 1-7; hereafter designated PK.

spirit of I John, John 17:10-20 and of H. R. Niebuhr's type, "Christ Against Culture."[6] Communion with the Master, Jesus Christ, has serious ethical implications;

> Because he is in communion with Jesus Christ he has to fight not against flesh and blood but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness.[7]

The eschatological battle with the principalities and powers is a major concern of his ethics.

Who are these powers? Ellul identifies in his later writings that "technique" and "the city" are two examples of principalities and powers, which must be fought as spiritual powers. The principalities are structures of sin and evil which are a mixture of spiritual power and man's work. "Technique" is "the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency in every field of human activity." He says of this "power":

> What seems most disquieting is that the character of technique renders it independent of man himself. . . . The important thing is that man, practically speaking, no longer possesses any means of bringing action to bear upon technique . . . . Technique is essentially independent of the human being, who finds himself naked and disarmed before it.[8]

The city is also an independent, specific being which is a mixture of spiritual power and man's work and which has an orientation toward evil.[9] He describes the demonic control of the city over man: "He is used, consumed, eaten away, possessed in heart and soul . . . ."[10]

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[6] H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), pp. 45-82.

[7] PK, p. 8.

[8] The Technological Society (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 306; the definition of technique, p. xxv.

[9] Jacques Ellul, The Meaning of the City (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 15, 114, 169; hereafter designated MC.

Why are these powers at work when Christ is supposed to be Lord? Ellul replies as follows:

> Thus we must accept the fact that the powers defeated by Christ are still at work, that they refuse to admit their defeat and are struggling more violently than ever.[11]

How do we fight these powers? Ellul criticizes Christians who fight the demonic powers by adopting the same materialistic and violent method of the rest of the world. To act like the world acts shows that Christians have been spiritually defeated.[12] For example, Christians in taking up arms against Nazism fell prey to the "Nazi Spirit" which has become victorious in the world since then. The Allied victory has led ironically to the "Nazification of the West."

Christians should fight spiritual power spiritually, for example, by prayer. He does not say that "acts of preservation" like the military defeat of Hitler are unnecessary. But he does establish an agenda of priority for Christians. The Christian is liberated by grace from the fatality of this world so that he can fight the rulers of death, and fight with the proper means. We also fight these principalities and powers by challenging their authority, questioning their absolute claim to power, and relativizing their pretentious position.

Ellul is careful not to believe natural man can effectively save himself or the world. In his writings, the realm of nature is totally fallen. God's grace breaking into human experience is the only hope. Man's low position as he battles the demonic forces is vividly expressed in a later work, de-mythologizing modern man via the biblical faith:

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[10] MC, p. 169. [11] MC, p. 166. [12] PK, pp. 23-27.

> How ridiculous, how grotesque is the bravado of naked little man--bravado filling every newspaper, every socialist doctrine, every Protestant journal, every belief in the rebirth of humanism. "I am, and there is none else," man shouts. "I will stop the whole mess, I will put it in order. It's not so bad as it seems . . . . There is no reason to be afraid of these new developments. In a few decades we will be familiar with them. All we have to do is adapt and not reject them (for refusal is devilish, as has been known since the work of Freud) . . . . We'll handle it." Poor little man. You failed to notice that you are not dealing with flesh and blood, but with Thrones, and Powers and dominations which are attacking you, grinding you under, dominating you from every side, and that the Devil's last trick is to make you think that you can put order back into this chaos, that you are going to get spiritually big enough to control the world![13]

As we battle the powers we take the world of necessity seriously, but we must not absolutize it. The eschatological presence means *the relativizing of all things and a total seriousness applied to the relative*. We fall victim either to: 1) absolutizing the finite; or 2) falling into despair or relativism. The Christian must both relativize all things and take the relative seriously. Ellul says that the sole important task in the liberation of man is "the relentless relativizing of all great causes, beliefs, and ideologies."[14]

Ellul states the proper relationship of the Christian to the principalities and powers: He/she must not worship them along with Jesus Christ.

> He (man) of course wants Jesus Christ, but with the addition of science, politics, power, etc. . . . only the rigorous insistence on the Transcendent, maintained, believed, and obeyed, assures the relativizing of everything in the name of which man kills and oppresses other men.[15]

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[13] *MC*, pp. 166-167.

[14] *Hope in Time of Abandonment* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), pp. 242-244.

[15] Ibid., p. 245.

We must take the relative seriously because God became incarnate and died in the relative in order to save it. However, the political-social consequences of this ethic demand combat with the false absolutes of our world.

This relativizing presence of the kingdom is revolutionary, challenging every institution, law, and reform, and opening up closed autonomous systems by standing in contradiction to them. This revolutionary presence of the kingdom Ellul calls the reality of hope:

> The challenge of hope is the introduction into a closed age, into a tight security, into an autocephalous organization, into an autonomous economic system, into totalitarian politics, of an opening, a breech, a heteronomy, an uncertainty, and a question.[16]

False Eschatology

In The False Presence of the Kingdom Ellul warns us of two kinds of false eschatology. The first kind has the correct starting point: "Jesus Christ has conquered the world. He has stripped the thrones and principalities of their pretensions." However, false conclusions are drawn: all human works are valid, saved, and the expressive will of God. The Christians can pronounce only the great "Yes" of God over man's works, embracing all within Christ's Lordship. Hence the Christian can and should take part in politics, technological progress, without asking any discerning questions. No questions are asked about demonic works (Satan is defeated!). "By the resurrection, God has barred the road to everything which is negative and dead. Through the obedience of his Son, God has rendered disobedience impossible." This false eschatology is a perversion of the truth. "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."[17]

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[16] Ibid., p. 248.

This realized eschatology proclaims that the kingdom is already brought to pass, collapsing the tension between the "already accomplished" and the "not yet brought to pass." The realized kingdom calls forth unbridled optimism in the progress of "good" man.[18]

The proper eschatology answers this falsehood as follows: The Lordship of Christ does not signify a restoration of the creation to its integrity.

> The world is no more restored in its concrete existence than I cease to be a sinner because pardoned, or that I cease to be mortal because risen in Christ.[19]

The fact that Jesus is Lord in no way guarantees that man's works are expressive of His Lordship and that we should participate in them without reservation. The "world" is still the "world" whose Prince is Satan; it is a world in revolt. Ellul refutes this realized eschatology as a naive theology of glory which removes the tension between the world and the kingdom.[20] The sum of false eschatology is that the Church justifies the world.

Here is what the true eschatological perspective is: people in the world are enslaved by the world. They belong to political, economic, and intellectual forces. The Church is there to proclaim the truth and to bring them freedom through God. We do this through our involvement by bringing a new orientation, another set of values.[21]

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[17] The False Presence of the Kingdom (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), pp. 13-16; hereafter designated FPK.

[18] FPK, pp. 17-18.

[19] FPK, p. 16.

[20] FPK, pp. 17-19.

[21] FPK, pp. 39-43.

One of the primary ways in which the Church has adopted false eschatology and has tried to justify the world is in politics. The Church has become apostate as she has tried to become one of the powers of the world and to employ the same methods as her adversaries. Ellul launches an attack which shocks our "modern" ears:

> . . . every time the Church has gotten into the political game, no matter what the manner of her entry, no matter what her opinion or opposing choices in a political situation with regard to an institution, she has been drawn every time into a betrayal, either of revealed truth or of the incarnate love.[22]

Politics is the Church's constant temptation set before her by the Prince of this world. If, however, politicization is one trap set by the Prince, spiritualization is the other trap, causing acquiescence to the Prince and thereby giving him a free hand. Ellul does not emphasize the trap of "spiritual Christianity" because he does not see this as the principal threat to the Church today.

In one of his recent works, The New Demons,[23] Ellul launches an all out attack on modern principalities and powers. The thesis of the book is that modern man lives not in a "secular" world but in a sacral world. The "sacred today" is ordered around technological expertise and the nation-state.[24] Modern myths are "history" and "science." Ellul reveals the new religions controlling men and women today. Among the chief sacreds are the delirium of consumption, the worship of technology, and the liturgy of advertising. The supreme new sacred/religion of our age is politics,[25] i.e., Marxism, Nazism, and Maoism. Ellul compares phenomenologically this new religion with the old religions and shows the strong resemblences: irrationality, mystique, mythology (divine king), sacral literature (Marx), messianism, eschatology, theology, lifestyle, clergy, ecclesiology (party), and liturgy. "Political man is the perfect equivalent of traditional religious man."[26]

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[22] FPK, p. 125.

[23] The New Demons (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975); hereafter designated ND.

[24] ND, pp. 70-87.

[25] ND, pp. 167-189.

Ellul confronts the West also contending that today liberal democratic countries are following suit and becoming sacralized.[27] Politics is the place of final truth. "Politics is Baal."[28] The solution, as Ellul sees it, is to desacralize the modern religions. The power to desacralize is the power of the gospel.[29]

Ellul, like an impassioned warrior, lays out our options as Christians. If we think we are in a secularized grown-up, man-come-of-age world, we are blind to reality. The correct option is to:

> . . . think of ourselves as being in a world inhabited by hidden gods, a world swaying from mystique to mystique, a world in which the Christian revelation has once again to play its role as negator and destroyer of the sacred obsessions, of the religious phantasmagoria, in order to liberate man and bring him, not to the self his demons are making him want to be, but to the self his Father wills him to be.
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> The fight of faith . . . is a fight for his freedom. Reinserted into a sacred, a prisoner of his own myths, he is completely alienated in his neo-religions--this brave "modern man." To smash these idols, to desacralize these mysteries, to assert the falseness of these religions is to undertake the one, finally indispensable liberation of the person of our times.[30]

This initial glimpse of Ellul's ethics shows in it the dominant motif of the battle against the principalities and powers. As a sociologist by profession and a Christian theologian by conversion of mind and heart, Ellul piercingly lets the New Testament demythologize us and expose the principalities of our time: among them are politics, propaganda, ideology, technique, and the "city."

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[26] ND, p. 189.

[27] ND, pp. 197-198.

[28] This is the apt phrase and theme of Will Campbell and James Holloway in their book Up To Our Steeples in Politics, op. cit., especially pp. 59ff.

[29] ND, p. 223.

[30] ND, pp. 227-228.

An Ethic of Witness

Thus far we have seen the critical function of his eschatological ethic emphasizing the radical discontinuity between history and the kingdom of God, between man's works and God's work, between the world and the Word. Daniel Berrigan puts it this way:

> Ellul must be respected for his firmly, even obsessively held conviction that the Christian faith is a "scandal to the world;" and the world ought to be a scandal also for faith.[31]

Ellul's ethic has a more positive, constructive mode as well as its critical mode. We might term this an ethic of witness to the presence of the kingdom.

In *The Presence of the Kingdom*, Ellul describes this ethic of witness as being a sign, a sign of the presence of the kingdom. As such we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and sheep in the midst of wolves.[32] As signs we live at the vortex of the eschatological tension between human history and God's kingdom. The conflict is apocalyptic; we live an "agonistic" life--one of "a final decisive conflict."[33]

As a sign we reflect God's good, not the "good" of the world. How the Christian works for good in the world is of utmost importance. One of Ellul's more definitive explanations of the eschatological life-style has to do with the relations of the _ends_ and the _means_. In his critique of technological society Ellul says that technique has replaced morality, that efficiency has swallowed up the question of the "right," and that everything has become means. In sharp distinction, Ellul says:

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[31] From an unpublished essay by Berrigan on Ellul, "The Return to Breast of Red Meat for Rotten," p. 1.

[32] *PK*, p. 9ff.

[33] *PK*, pp. 20-21.

> . . . for Christians there is no dissociation between the end and the means . . . . in the work of God the end and the means are identical . . . .[34]

In the eschatological activity of God the _means appears as the realized presence of the end_. Christians receive the _end_ in themselves by the grace of God and must represent before the world this unity of means and end. Our means are God's end working in the world.[35] He explains,

> It means, for instance, that we have not to strive and struggle in order that righteousness may reign upon the earth. We have to _be_ 'just' or 'righteous' ourselves, bearers of righteousness . . . . This is because the just man lives by the justice of Christ.[36]

We should not avoid striving for justice in this world; however, for Ellul, the _means_ adopted in search of this justice are not judged by achievement--the result--but are judged by the pure means of the kingdom of God.[37] This ethic is a warning to those Christians willing to resort to any means in order to gain the end of justice or liberation. The results do not depend on us; but we are responsible for our means. This ethic is expressed by Jesus: "Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).[38]

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[34] _PK_, p. 79.

[35] _PK_, pp. 79-81.

[36] _PK_, p. 81; emphasis mine.

[37] _PK_, p. 89.

[38] _PK_, p. 95.

The Christian's stance is revolutionary because his own authority is different from that of the world, i.e., politics, psychology, etc. One mark of this Christian posture is explained in an essay on the virtue of inutility.[39] In it he says that our Christian life often leads us to do things which the world deems useless, for example, prayer and reflection. Our vocation superseded worldly canons of success and efficiency. Daniel Berrigan's ethic, as we shall see, is a vivid example of Ellul's thought at this point.

The ethic of witness is one of being based on God's eschatological activity. "Man's doing should become, be, and remain that of a person who acquiesces in God's doing."[40] The first volume of Ellul's Christian ethics, To Will and To Do: An Ethical Research for Christians, finds its scriptural base in Phil. 2:13--"For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure." The presence of the kingdom is the norm, source and power of Christian ethics.

Ellul's ethic sees its authority only in God's kingdom. As such, the Christian often looks ridiculous in the eyes of the world; for, sometimes the Christian witnesses to the hope of the kingdom by watching and waiting. Folly to the world, waiting is the fighting spirit and burning expectation of the kingdom. The waiting person:

> . . . has to know that the judgment against him will be as radical as his waiting, for if there is one thing our society cannot accept, since it is all for efficiency, production, action, politics, and victory, it is just that very attitude . . . . It can swallow anything except precisely the person who is firm in his attitude of the radically other, who has anchored his boat in outside

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[39] Ellul, The Politics of God and the Politics of Man (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 190-199.

[40] To Will and To Do (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), p. 258.

> waters, who hopes for what no historic development can ever bring . . . .[41]

Waiting is not following the frenetic activism of the world. Ellul declares:

> It is not the pursuit of justice, nor the defense of the poor, nor political activity, nor the third world, nor hunger, nor the renewal of the Church, nor hermeneutics. Those things are simply diversionary traps to turn us aside from exclusive, central, stubborn, and enthusiastic waiting.[42]

We act only in relation to God's kingdom. Waiting and watching, like being a sign, are totally dependent upon God's activity.

Ellul's ethic would seem at this point to be other-worldly, and it would be if his stubborn denial of the efficacy of man's work were not accompanied by a determined faith in the historical efficacy of God's work. Commenting on the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, the Word of God, Ellul says,

> This Word of God is not an exterior, foreign power, falling from the sky, representative of the Wholly Other and of the Incommunicable: no, here very clearly it is integrated into the general movement (of history). It is not only the preaching of the Gospel but all that contributes to the glory of God . . ., every act of love which makes God present in the midst of men, all that which sustains life against death . . . . all that which is true power (the crown) against established violence (the sword), all that which is abundance (the bow) against the famine, all that which is true victory against the final defeat . . . . This Word of God also makes history with the others (other horsemen).[43]

The picture of the historical activity of the Word of God may appear to be a more positive picture than is elsewhere presented in Ellul. Ellul has been rigorously criticized for his pervasive pessimism. If the "later" Ellul is more positive, it is not because he has an appreciated view of the power of man,[44] but rather because he has a firmer faith in the power of the Word of God in history. In any case Ellul has maintained the two strong elements of his theological ethic: the battle against the "powers" and the ethic of witness to the presence of God's kingdom.

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[41] Hope in Time of Abandonment (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 264.

[42] Ibid., p. 263.

[43] Jacques Ellul, Apocalypse: The Book of Revelation (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), p. 155.

WILLIAM STRINGFELLOW

William Stringfellow, an American lawyer and lay theologian, complements the work of Ellul with his cogent study and interpretation of the "principalities and powers" of our modern world, especially in America. Instrumental in getting Ellul's works introduced and published in America, Stringfellow finds in Ellul a true fellow warrior in the battle against the powers.

The Fall and the "Powers"

An important starting point for his theology is the statement of the fallenness of all creation. Living in the midst of the Fall means that not only persons, but also all of creation, including the principalities and powers, are fallen.[45] The singular issue of Christian ethics is "how to live humanly during the Fall."[46] This ethic, both individual and social,

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[44] In Ellul's most recent translated work, The Betrayal of the West (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), Ellul grimly announces that "the West is at its end" (p. 200) because it has been betrayed by the "Left" which is "the sole legitimate heir" of the West (p. 205). This work is a grim reprise of his vision of man dominated by technique and other "powers" (pp. 136ff.).

[45] William Stringfellow, An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land, op. cit., p. 19; hereafter designated EFC.

[46] EFC, p. 55.

> . . . must deal with human decision and action in relation to other creatures, notably the principalities and powers in the very midst of the conflict, distortion, alienation, disorientation, chaos, decadence of the Fall.[47]

Who are the principalities and powers? They are images (Marilyn Monroe, motherhood, sex), ideologies (communism, capitalism, materialism), and institutions (governments, corporations, universities, "the family"). Money, class, fashion, and race are also fallen spiritual forces. The traits of the principalities are as follows:[48]

The powers are legion. As shown above, they exist in many forms, as diverse as the Pentagon and commercial sports.

They are creatures. They have an existence above, beyond and apart from individuals; they are corporate personalities.[49] Thus, a corporation has a personality that is different from, and more than, the sum of the persons who participate in it.

The principalities are fallen. They are alienated from God, assume their own autonomy and exercise dominion over human beings. In other words, they have a profound confusion over their true identity and personify the reality of Death in the fallen world.

They represent an inverse dominion. Instead of being directed and controlled by humans, they dominate and enslave human life.

They are aggressors. Thus, human lives become victims: George Jackson is a victim of law and racism, or an Appalachian family is the victim of the coal mining industry.

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[47] EFC, p. 55.

[48] EFC, pp. 77-94. See also his work, Free in Obedience (New York: Seabury Press, 1964), pp. 50-73; hereafter designated FIO.

[49] It is interesting as Stringfellow notes, EFC, p. 79, that the law recognizes corporate personality.

They have acolytes. For example, Domitian was the acolyte of the demonic principality, Rome; Melvin Laird was an acolyte of the Pentagon.

The principalities and powers participate in rivalry and fornication with each other (Rev. 18:7-15); for example, the Military-Industrial-Educational complex, or the rivalry of nations.

They have one morality--the ethic of survival. Technique becomes supreme for many principalities as all ethical decisions are subsumed under the question, "What will insure our survival?"

Are principalities inherently evil? Stringfellow would say, No. We are to summon the powers and principalities to their vocation--the enhancement of human life! He goes on:

> Confronting the powers with their creaturehood--admonishing the principalities about their vocation as creatures called to serve the social need of human beings--is a requisite for Jerusalem (the company of Christians).[50]

However, according to Stringfellow, we are not to assume from these thoughts that some of the powers are benign. This view is both theologically false and empirically unwarranted. For, the Fall is the essential condition of creation.[51]

The Eschatological Vocation of the Church

As the Church battles the principalities and powers, she has a vocation which is "inherently eschatological." The Church:

> is the emissary of the eschaton in this world . . . the task of Christian orthodoxy--the witness of the Church--is always to

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[50] EFC, p. 57.

[51] EFC, p. 83.

> beseech the end of the world, thus always to complain about the world, since, eschatologically the end of the world is its perfection in Christ.[52]

Eschatological hope anticipates and gives witness to the presence of the coming kingdom in the midst of time and history.[53] Stringfellow gives us a parable of eschatological existence in the role of Jerusalem in the book of Revelation. Jerusalem is the eschatological existence of renewed mature humanity in the midst of fallen creation.[54] It is:

> . . . dynamic and erratic, spontaneous and radical, audacious and immature, committed if not altogether coherent . . . visible here and there and now and then, but unsettled institutionally, most of all--enacting a fearful hope for human life in society.[55]

While Babylon represents the principality in bondage to death, Jerusalem represents the liberation of human life from the power of death and as such "breaks through time, transcends time, anticipates within time the abolition of time."[56] The Jerusalem occurrence is the eschatological event that reveals the end of history as fulfillment of life here and now.[57] The Christian lives as an alien in Babylon in the midst of apocalyptic reality. In her participation in the eschatological event of community, Jerusalem brings apocalypse to Babylon.

The citizens of Jerusalem live in vigilance and consolation.[58] They live and act in anticipation of the victory of Christ; herein is vigilance. Having been in bondage to death, now set free by Christ, the Christians know that death, along with its principalities and powers, is not to be feared and worshipped;[59] herein is consolation.

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[52] "The Orthodoxy of Involvement" in Katallegete, 1965, vol. 1, p. 17.

[53] EFC, p. 44. [54] EFC, pp. 58f. [55] EFC, p. 60. [56] EFC, p. 60.

[57] EFC, pp. 60-61. [58] EFC, p. 152. [59] EFC, p. 153.

William Stringfellow has incisively interpreted the reality of the principalities and powers for our day. His interpretation helps the New Testament witness de-mythologize us as it did first century man, asking us, "Who is your Lord? Under whose control is your life lived?"

The dominant theme of his theology is that we live in a world under the power of death seeking to bear witness to the death-conquering power of the resurrection. It is the supremely demonic power of death that stands behind all the powers of the world. The Christian has a sacramental presence in the world which witnesses to God's triumph over death. Christians are set free to enter into the depths of the life of the world in its bondage to death in order to offer nothing but their own lives.[60]

> The Christian is free enough both from his own death and from the reign of death in the world to realize and recognize the signs of death in that world: narcotics, slums, racism, unemployability, disease, or the oppression of men by the principalities of commerce, patriotism, sports, communications media, and ideologies.[61]

For the American middle class, death works through affluence, social conformity, boredom, lust, and ambition.[62]

Stringfellow's own life is an incarnation of his Christian ethic. He graduated from Harvard Law School and in 1956 went to Harlem to work with the poor and disenfranchised. His home was a small tenement room. He assumed poverty as a part of that vulnerability to death he could now freely choose as a Christian.[63] His life was to be a life lived with and for those others who were most vulnerable to the power of death in America. This is his vision of Christian vocation, ". . . to care for the outcast means to love your own enemy."[64]

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[60] _FIO_, p. 38. [61] _FIO_, p. 39. [62] _FIO_, p. 68.

[63] _My People is the Enemy; An Autobiographical Polemic_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

Our calling is the answer to the question "How can we act humanly in the midst of the Fall?" or "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"[65] This means not only that we expose the powers of death in this world, but also that we through our lives witness to the "ecumenical, militant, triumphant presence of God."[66] We witness to God's presence through preaching, liturgy and mission of a church free to become poor in order to serve. His vision is not of a baptized social work or welfare system. In fact he criticized the work of the liberal ministers in the East Harlem Protestant Parish for abandoning the Bible and liturgy in favor of a crusade to change Harlem into a middle class neighborhood.[67]

Stringfellow's description of Christian ethics consists of these components. 1) Realism: the Christian is free to face the full impact of the fall, the reign of death. 2) Inconsistency: the Christ as servant of God's Word is not enslaved to any rationalism, institution, or ideology. 3) Radicalism: the Christian is perpetually complaining about the status quo--he is an alien in a strange land. And, 4) Intercession: the Christian is concerned for all men--his primary concern for the poor is at the same time a concern for the rich.[68]

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[64] FIO, p. 46. [65] EFC, p. 21. [66] EFC, p. 41.

[67] Elaborated in My People is the Enemy, esp. pp. 85ff. The people to whom he is referring were the liberal Union Theological Seminary students and graduates. He accused their work of conforming to the world instead of to the Word of God.

[68] Dissenter in a Great Society (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966).

Stringfellow's latest book[69] is a provocative clarification of his thought on the "powers." "Biblical politics" as he delineates it transcends any particular political arrangement or philosophy. Hope comes not from any particular political strategy but only from the activity of the Word of God in history. Biblical politics contradicts the politics of the "powers" of this age.[70]

Death, the supreme "power," is militant and pervasive: "every relationship is broken or corrupt or diminished to violence, anti-worship is endemic for institutions and nations as well as persons."[71] Stringfellow reiterates a consistent premise in his thought, that the fallenness of the "powers" is conjunctive with the fallenness of humanity but is not derivative from it.[72] At this point, Stringfellow sees himself as distinct from the piety of Billy Graham, from the Social Gospel of Rauschenbusch and from the Christian Realism of Niebuhr.

> It is misleading, hence to speak of an institution or nation or political regime becoming demonic, as if its fallen character were, somehow contingent upon human action . . . . such a view . . . not only denies the creaturely status of the principalities and powers but also denies that the whole creation originates in the Word of God. It denigrates God as Creator by exaggerating the potency and scope of human sin.[73]

An example is the chaotic dysfunction of the Pentagon technocracy. This failure constitutes a sign of the fallenness of the principality itself rather than as merely the consequence of human sin,

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[69] Conscience and Obedience: The Politics of Romans 13 and Revelation 13 in Light of the Second Coming (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1977); hereafter designated CO.

[70] CO, pp. 12-13.

[71] CO, p. 30.

[72] CO, p. 30.

[73] CO, pp. 30-31.

> . . . either on the part of certain sinful individuals located on the premises of the Pentagon (as Graham might assert) or ascribed to accrued collective sin (as Neibuhr [sic] argued).[74]

The distinction Stringfellow makes is crucial for him. The theological issue at stake is "whether creation belongs to the Word of God as a unique activity." The political issue at stake is "the scope of human capability vis a vis the principalities and powers which rule this passing age."[75] Stringfellow cautions, along with Ellul, against man's pretension in trying to justify himself or to save the world.

The hope of the Christian lies in living in the imminence of the eschaton, or, the Second Coming of Christ. The purpose of the second advent is the secret of the first advent: the political restoring of all creation to its original vocation and the destruction of the powers.[76]

The vocation of the church as a holy nation anticipating the eschaton while living amid the fall is one of advocacy. The church is the advocate of every victim of the rulers of this age not because the victim is right but simply because the victim is a victim.[77] Its vocation manifests itself in a resistance which recalls political authority to its true vocation.[78]

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[74] CO, pp. 64-65. I think that Stringfellow's judgment on Billy Graham's position is accurate; but it is less accurate concerning the Social Gospel (see EFC, p. 17) and even less accurate concerning Niebuhr. Rauschenbusch realized that converting individuals was not the same as converting institutions, that these were two equally important goals. And Niebuhr emphasized that the sin of collectives was more than cumulative, collective sin. Stringfellow ought to see Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr more as allies than he does.

[75] CO, p. 66.

[76] CO, pp. 79-80.

[77] CO, p. 94.

[78] CO, p. 98.

The conscience of the Christian is a vital resource in resisting the powers. As defined by Stringfellow, conscience

> . . . does not mean a private unilateral, self-serving morally superior opinion held by an individual disconnected from the community, but it bespeaks the freedom to transcend self, to expend life, to share in suffering, to risk death for the sake of others and on behalf of the world . . . .[79]

Summary. Stringfellow's ethic of resistance is lived out by deep involvement in this world as a member of Christ's church in its eschatological battle with the "powers." This struggle consists of: 1) the realistic view of the world and its ruling "powers" as fallen; 2) the task of unmasking the pretensions of the powers and resisting them in those pretensions; 3) the call to the "powers" to their original vocation--serving man and glorifying God; 4) the witness to God's power over death on the basis of the efficacy of God's Word in history; 5) the vocation of the church as a holy nation, an advocate of the victims, and free to give up its life on behalf of those victims; and 6) the rejection of most but not all traditional political activity while affirming God's involvement in politics.[80]

DANIEL BERRIGAN

Daniel Berrigan's life is preeminently the expression of his ethic of resistance. It is the biography of faith: who you are and what you do. And it is the geography of faith: where God places you--nonviolence, resistance, prison. His ethic is an ethic of witness, an ethic of being a sign, a sign of God's values, of His kingdom, a sign amid the confused signals of the world. The Christian bears witness as the sacramental presence of God in the world.

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[79] CO, p. 102.

[80] Stringfellow and Ellul have participated in political structures even though they condemn "politics" as enslaved to technique, money and other "powers"; this ambiguity is partly due to the lack of precision in their writing and partly due to their distinction between the power of God's work and the powerlessness of man's work; see Stringfellow's article on Ellul, "Kindred mind and brother," Sojourners, 6 (June, 1977), p. 12.

Berrigan, as some have noted, has a bit of pixie in him. He is a poet and an outraged human being. He is a fugitive from the F. B. I. for months with simultaneous moral passion and prankishness--it is lark, it is deadly serious drama. He is the court's prophet, and joker; he is priest and actor. He acts with what seems to some to be moral surety approaching arrogance, yet he describes his actions with a disarming modesty. Berrigan is a poet and an activist; the poetry and the action are of one fabric. His theology of resistance is "theopoetic" praxis. His Christian life-style is an ethic of non-violent resistance to the "powers."

A glimpse of his biography and "geography of faith" will reveal something essential about his ethic of resistance. His life reads backward from May 17, 1968. Daniel and Phillip, his brother, and seven others walk into the Selective Service office, empty several filing cabinets of draft files into large wire trash baskets. They go outside, pour some home-made napalm on them and light them.

It was a sacrament, a sign, to protest the perversion of American values--property values above human life--and to correct by a dramatic inversion the way things are. Berrigan provokes, explains, mocks:

Our apologies good friends
for the fracture of good order the burning of paper
instead of children the angering of the orderlies
in the front parlor of the charnel house.
We could not so help us God do otherwise
For we are sick at heart our hearts
give us no rest for thinking of the Land of Burning
Children.[81]

What led him to this? His family roots are revealing. Berrigan's grandparents had fled the Irish potato famine.[82] His father, Tom Berrigan, had two loves, poetry which he wrote in torrents and the labor movement. He was a tall, belligerent man, demanding and given to fits of temper. Phillip Berrigan, Daniel's brother, says that his father made him a rebel. Both sons inherited their father's social passion for the laboring poor. Daniel at an early age became the most sensitive, frail and devout of the family. His mother remembers, "From the age of six, Daniel was obsessed by the suffering in the world." At age eighteen he entered the Jesuit order because he suspected its revolutionary history.

From the beginning Daniel was disturbed by the lack of social consciousness in the Roman Catholic Church. While in school he became enamored with the French Resistance and with the worker-priest movement. The Jesuits sent him to France in 1953 for a year of study. He says about it: "Something says, 'I was born here.'" The worker-priest participation in underground resistance became a formative influence on his theology of civil disobedience. Their socialist, anti-colonial political philosophy also had great influence. Daniel explains:

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[81] Daniel Berrigan, The Trial of the Catonsville Nine (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 93; hereafter designated TCN.

[82] The biographical detail up to 1968 is taken largely from Francine du Plessix Gray, Divine Disobedience (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 45-228. Hereafter designated DD.

> The worker-priests radicalized me like nothing else had before. They gave me, for the first time, a practical vision of the Church as she should be.[83]

Later he reflected about Charles de Foucauld and the worker-priest movement: "to renew the sense of poverty within the Church is almost equivalent to a renewal of the whole fabric of her life."[84]

When he returned in 1954, he was primed to involve himself deeply in social activism and pacifism, much to the distress of his Church superiors. The next nine years were active years engaged not only in social ministries, but also in ecclesiastical renewal. The tension he caused led to his being "asked" to go on a sabbatical to France in 1963. The year was again a transforming one. The kenosis theology popular among the worker-priests influenced him greatly.[85] This theology was a fervent reformist theology in the tradition of St. Francis. It saw the true Church as the dissenting, impoverished, saving remnant. Its Church-State position was much like that of the radical reformation.

Within a few years after his return to America, he became a controversial, idolized, charismatic figure, a cult leader among the Jesuits and Catholic left. Daniel helped edit the liberal periodical, Jesuit Missions; he mixed with the powerful among the liberal community. Thomas Merton, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King continued to influence him. But it was the Vietnam war that most radicalized him. He became a leader in *Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam*. Again, he got into hot water with the Church "fathers."

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[83] DD, p. 69.

[84] They Call Us Dead Men (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 32.

[85] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

Cardinal Cushing exiled him to Latin America in 1965. The pretext was a writing mission. It was, says Berrigan, "like tossing Br'er Rabbit into the briar patch."[86] He saw the devastation of American foreign policy; he witnessed the unbelievable depths of human poverty. The trip further honed his conscience to the sharpness and hardness needed for Catonsville and jail.

His years at Cornell as a college chaplain involved him in the college activism against the war. He was the poet laureate, the *cause celebre*, of the anti-war movement. But he was troubled. He says, "I was threatened with being the golden boy of the movement, I was too old to burn a draft card. Suddenly I saw that my sweet skin was hiding behind others."[87]

In 1968 he went to Hanoi to bring back some prisoners of war. He saw the destruction wielded by our war machine. While there, he suddenly found himself in the middle of a United States bombing raid. He crawled down in a bomb-shelter and held a Vietnamese boy while bombs burst above:

> I picked up the littlest
> a boy, his face
> breaded with rice (his sister calmly feeding
> him as we climbed down)
> In my arms fathered
> in a moment's grace, the messiah
> of all my tears. I bore, reborn
>
> a Hiroshima child from hell.[88]

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[86] *TCN*, p. 86.

[87] *DD*, p. 131.

[88] *Selected and New Poems* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1973), p. 187.

He came back more disturbed. What would he do? One day he went to a hospital to see a young high school student who had immolated himself in protest of the war. The boy was at the point of death. Berrigan smelled the burning flesh:

> I knew I must speak and act
> against death
> because this boy's death
> was being multiplied
> a thousandfold
> in the Land of Burning Children
>
> I saw suddenly and it struck with the
> force of lightning
> that my position was false
> I was threatened with verbalizing
> my moral substance out of existence.[89]

Phillip Berrigan had already, on October 27, 1965, defaced draft records with human blood. For his newly proposed action--pouring the napalm on draft files at Catonsville--he wanted his brother to join. Daniel and Phillip sat up alone until 4 A. M. talking. Daniel decided to act. The stone at the pit of his stomach dissolved. He was his joyous self again. He had escaped the country-club left, "the liberal white ghetto."[90]

The trial was conceived by Berrigan as a morality play, dramatized before the entire nation, a stage on which to re-present their witness, to focus the ugliness of Vietnam, and to magnify the official government response to them. Daniel would later write from underground to actors preparing to present the play he wrote from the trial's transcripts, The Trial of the Catonsville Nine:

> We all share a certain hope that the Catonsville play might speak to the people, might bring them to a more accurate, realistic, and

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[89] TCN, p. 92.

[90] DD, p. 138.

> painful sense of things. At the same time we wish to release a capacity for hope and joy. This was the spirit in which we carried off our Catonsville caper, and faced its consequences.[91]

The trial was an impassioned morality play. The nine defendants were angry, eloquent, joyful, poignant; they were actors and victims. Daniel, never one to give up a chance for the dramatic, entered the courtroom for the first time. Gray describes the scene:

> Daniel Berrigan made a spectacular stage entrance, prancing, gazelle-like, towards the bar, frequently stopping to autograph copies of his latest book . . . . He took a ballet position, one foot pointed behind the other, to sign each volume with a comical flourish of his pen. Pirouetting, relishing the laughter . . . . he took deep and cynical stage bows . . . . Then with a wide grin, he exhibited his talisman of the week for everyone to see. It was a color photograph of his brother Phillip which he had mounted into a medallion, and which he wore around his neck throughout the trial, just as, in the Church of long ago, Christians wore images of their patron saints in time of crisis.[92]

At one point in the trial Berrigan gave this sacramental interpretation of their act of burning paper to protest the burning of children:

> We say: killing is disorder
> life and gentleness and community and unselfishness
> is the only order we recognize
> For the sake of that order
> we risk our liberty   our good name
> The time is past when good men may be silent
> when obedience
> can segregate men from public risk
> when the poor can die without defense.[93]

They were convicted and sentenced. Daniel Berrigan chose not to report for induction to prison. In April, 1970, he went underground becoming a fugitive from the F. B. I. He did so to attract more attention to the war and their witness. What did it mean, one asked him? "It means I am learning to pray . . . . My brother, Phillip, meditating in prison; myself, meditating in someone's attic room . . . . We are trying to get reborn."[94] Sacrament, sign, and the Lord were tied mysteriously with the napalm, the files, and the plight of the suffering.

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[91] America is Hard to Find (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1972), p. 87; hereafter designated AHF.

[92] DD, p. 166.

[93] TCN, p. 94.

While underground he wrote across that underground to the Weathermen. What he said to this revolutionary group has greatest significance:

> No principle is worth the sacrifice of a single human being . . . . A revolution is interesting insofar as it avoids like the plague the plague it promises to heal.[95]

At the same time Berrigan was radicalizing Middle America, he was urging non-violence to the Weathermen.

After six months as a fugitive, he was captured and served eighteen months in prison. Prison: "This is a lousy place to die. Most do. It is a good place to get born. Few do."[96] His writings while in prison reveal his indebtedness to Gandhi,[97] Merton,[98] and Bonhoeffer. He saw the continuity between what the New Testament calls grace and Gandhi calls soul-force.[99] Bonhoeffer was his teacher but not his model. In a poem "On the Passion of Dietrich Bonhoeffer," he asks, would Phil and I consider such an act as Bonhoeffer's assassination attempt? He answers,

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[94] The Dark Night of Resistance (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1971), pp. 177-178.

[95] The letter is found in The Berrigans, ed. Casey and Nobile, (New York: Praeger Pub., 1971), pp. 209-210.

[96] Lights On in the House of the Dead (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1974), 1974), p. 58; hereafter designated LO.

[97] LO, pp. 144ff., 303f.

[98] LO, pp. 237ff.

[99] LO, pp. 52-53.

> We would not, by any means.
> Which is not to say: we condemn this good man
> Only to say
> We have learned from him, from Hitler, from
> Johnson and Nixon.
>
> We too wish to be both Christian and contemporary
> And this accounts
> paradoxically, for the difference between us and him.[100]

Berrigan staunchly believes in the necessity of a non-violent witness. Violence is self-defeating; only non-violence is hopeful. "Purity of means alone guarantees purity of ends. One remembers his future by embodying it here and now." Politically speaking we are to resist evil with good.[101]

In prison he meditated on the Sermon on the Mount. In this meditation we get a glimpse of his ethic. Admitting its difficulty, Berrigan refuses to regard God's commands as impossible: "Put it this way, His commands express the outer reaches of human possibility." It is God's power in the "new man" that makes His will possible and actual.[102] The ethic of Jesus is then an ethic of witness, a sign made possible by the signatory power of God.

Released from prison in 1972, Berrigan has carried on his ethic of resistance. Today he is most active in the nuclear arms debate. His witness has these elements: 1) poverty; a sign of purity and solidarity with others who suffer; 2) pure ethics; a sign of the values of the kingdom in the world; 3) resistance; the "No" we proclaim to a violent world; 4) non-violence; the only creative, hopeful force in the world; we must be careful not to become the enemy in order to defeat him!

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[100] AHF, p. 47. [101] LO, pp. 88-89. [102] LO, pp. 87-88.

The sacramental nature of his ethics needs to be underlined. If Ellul and Stringfellow believe in the objective efficacy of the Word of God, Berrigan believes in the objective efficacy of the sacramental presence. Non-violence is a sacrament, as is voluntary prison experience, as was the napalm--"Pardon us good friends . . . ." About Jesus, Berrigan said, "He preferred to suffer violence in his person rather than to inflict it on others."[103] About David Darst, one of the Catonsville Nine who died in a fiery car crash just before he was to go to jail, he said:

> David Darst burned draft files. David Darst died by fire . . . . It is better to burn papers than children; it is better to die by fire than to kill by fire.[104]

The ethic of resistance is _an ethic of witness_ in contradistinction to _an ethic of consequence_. Berrigan abhors an ethic based on effectiveness or pragmatics. The question most aggravating and irrelevant to Berrigan concerning the Catonsville act is "What results did it have?"

How practical was your act, Dan? Has it not turned many people off? What good did it do? These questions have come incessantly to him. Had they missed the whole point? Gray remembers one of his responses to such questions:

> Of course, it had not been a useful act, a political act. Too many people were hung up on usefulness these days. If you're useful, you know, you become disposable . . . . How useful were the acts of the martyrs? How many martyrs ever had any practical programs for reforming society? Since politics weren't working anyway, one had to find an act beyond politics: a religious act, a liturgical act, an act of witness.[105]

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[103] In _Suspect Tenderness_, William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 6.

[104] _AHF_, p. 179.

[105] _DD_, pp. 56-57.

"Father Berrigan, would you describe what social programs and reforms and structures you would propose in place of the present ones?" asked someone from an audience in North Carolina. "No," replied Berrigan.

William Stringfellow agrees emphatically with Berrigan. He has talked to many of those who were in the French Resistance. Their actions were scattered, small efforts, ridiculed because they appeared so foolish in face of the monolithic Nazi machine. The risks were great and the hopes for results were practically nil. Yet these persons persevered "in their audacious, extemporaneous, fragile, puny, foolish Resistance." Why did they? Not in the belief of the "effectiveness" of their acts. "The answer to such a question is, I believe, that the act of resistance to the power of death incarnate in Nazism was the only means of retaining sanity and conscience. In the circumstances of the Nazi tyranny, resistance became the only human way to live."[106]

Berrigan's theology of resistance is a theology of bearing witness to the values of the kingdom of God which confront the values of the principalities and powers. Love and non-violence are the values of the form; death and violence are the values of the latter. Christian life is the "useless" life lived among and on behalf of the victims of the "powers." Two of his recent poems depict his ethic of resistance to the "powers." The first describes some of the "powers"; the second portrays his "useless" form of resistance:

A Prayer to the Blessed Trinity

I'm locked into the sins of General Motors
My guts are in revolt at the culinary equivocations of
General Foods

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[106] William Stringfellow, EFC, pp. 118-119.

  Hang over me like an evil shekinah, the missiles of
                                        General Electric.
Now we shall go from the Generals to the Particulars.
  Father, Son, Holy Ghost
Let me shake your right hands in the above mentioned order.
  Unmoved Motor, Food For Thought, Electric One.
I like you better than your earthly idols.
  You seem honest and clear-minded and reasonably resolved
To make good on your promise.
  Please: owe it to yourselves not less than to us,
Warn your people: beware of adulterations.[107]

Ambition

I wanted to be useless
as life itself; so
I told the president so
and told the pope so
and told the police so

& one & all chorused
like furies, like my friends -
and who told you so?

the dead told me so;
the near dead; prisoners;
all who press faces
against a pall of ice
against a wall of glass
a grave, a womb's thrall.

I read their lips, alas.
I told the poem. So. [108]

THE THEOLOGY OF RESISTANCE: AN ANALYSIS

The Theology of Resistance is an important American theological voice. As it insists upon Christian resistance to the "powers" its position on Christ and the powers is: Christ against the "powers." In many ways their position is close to H. Richard Niebuhr's "Christ against Culture" type. Their position in summary includes:

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[107] Daniel Berrigan, Prison Poems (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 10.

[108] In a personal letter, Fall, 1977, to the author.

1) A thoroughgoing critique of the evil character of the "powers."

2) A call for the Christian's conflict with, and resistance to, the powers.

3) An identification with, and advocacy for, the victims of the "powers."

4) A pessimistic if not cynical view of man as incapable of transforming the "powers."

5) A faith in the efficacy of the Word of God in history and the belief that only in the power of God is there hope.

6) An _ethic of witness_ as opposed to an _ethic of consequence_. This ethic of witness is determined to be sign of the pure values of Christ and his kingdom: peace, non-violence, and love. In this sense it is perfectionistic and not consequentialistic. In philosophical terms, it is de-ontological and not teleological. While it has faith in the work of God to transform history, its own ethic seeks not to transform the world but to point to the presence of the kingdom of God which can.

The Theology of Resistance stands within the tradition of American social Christianity even though it seeks to distinguish itself from the Social Gospel and Christian Realism. They all share belief in the historical and social relevance of the gospel and the belief in the power of God to transform history. With Rauschenbusch they share the conviction that the perfectionistic love ethic is the basis for Christian life and for human society. With Niebuhr they recognize the sinful stubbornness of the "powers" which causes Christ's love to become a suffering love. All three recognize the sinfulness of the "powers." The optimism of the Social Gospel was caused by the degree to which they thought Christian love could be applied to society simply and without compromise. Christian Realism knew not only that love suffers but also that certain compromises were needed to apply Christian love to the power structures. Resistance Theology mixes the perfectionism of the former and the realism of the latter. It knows that Christian love is a suffering love, but maintains that a heroic witness is possible and necessary. Resistance theology is perfectionism without illusion. As Christ is against the "powers," the "powers" are against Christ. The Christian joins Christ in resisting the "powers." Resistance Theology is not clear as to what forms of social or political activity, if any, are proper reflections of God's purposes. They concentrate on the critical symbolic forms of protest and the simple representation of the pure values of the kingdom of God.

Resistance Theology can be analyzed within our four theological motifs.

Eschatology and ethics. Resistance Theology perceives the world in eschatological struggle between Christ and the "powers." The victory of Christ is not the cessation of tension but rather the inauguration of the eschatological battle. The battle is eschatological because it is the tension between the power of the kingdom of God and the "powers" of this age.

We can immediately perceive a correspondence between Resistance Theology and Paul's Corinthian theology as they both battle the enthusiasts' realized eschatology. Resistance Theology fights a twentieth century form of enthusiasm, a liberal realized eschatology which proudly proclaims man "come of age" (or "divine"), able to secure his own paradise. The opponent is a theology of glory lived after the cross on way to exaltation. The false realized eschatology of modern enthusiasts is located in the pretentious realm of political messianism or technological salvation. Resistance Theology answers with the eschatological reserve, the "not yet" of the kingdom. History is not marching inevitably toward perfection. The kingdom of God confronts history with a radical "No." It is not to ourselves but to God that we look for victory. The kingdom comes not by the evolving of our life and history into perfection; rather, it comes bringing an end to our life and history.

Since man is utterly devoid of the power to save his world, the only hope is in the power of God and his kingdom. God's kingdom brings hope by opening up our closed, determined, technologized world and creating new possibilities. The ethic of resistance is an ethic of witness to this hope. There is no hope through programs designed to succeed according to the world's processes. There is only hope in witnessing to a power beyond this world.

Christ as Lord over the "powers." This is the theological motif which is most dissonant with Resistance Theology. To be sure they add their voices to the Pauline warning in Colossians against the additive pattern: Christ plus the "powers." Their theology is radically Christocentric. However, the passages which cause Resistance Theology problems are those in Colossians and Ephesians proclaiming Christ's victory over and Lordship of the "powers."

Harvey Cox parodied Ellul's theological perspective, "Sin abounds, but grace doesn't abound quite as much."[109] He has a point. The apocalyptic mood of resistance theology gives an overbearing feeling of world-foreignness. God appears so radically transcendent that one wonders if God is truly sovereign over the world, if Christ is truly Lord over the "powers." Sometimes in reading these men one wants to cry out, rephrasing Paul, "O Christ, where is thy victory?" Have the "powers" mesmerized these men?

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[109] Harvey Cox, "The Ungodly City: A Theological Response to Jacques Ellul," Commonweal, 94 (July 9, 1971), p. 355.

This issue brings to attention a crucial theological issue: Is Christ Lord of the powers only in hope? Is God's sovereignty only to be exercised in a future apocalyptic restoration of creation? Or, is God exercising his redemptive work in history today? Is Christ winning the eschatological battle with the "powers" within history or beyond it? We agree with Resistance Theology as it reminds utopian enthusiasts of the "not yet" of the kingdom. We ask, however, whether there is an "already" dimension to Christ's victory in this theology. The Colossian and Ephesian Christological hymns offer a challenge to the pessimism of resistance theology and its apocalyptic dualism: how and to what extent is Christ Lord of the world and its "powers?"

The "powers" as fallen and demonic. Resistance Theology offers a devastating description of the evil nature of the "powers." The "powers" only represent a fallen or evil character in this world. Although they call the "powers" to their vocation to serve humans, one wonders whether they really believe they can be so "humanized." Part of their difficulty is the lack of discrimination between the meaning of "fallen" and "demonic." The adjectives are virtually interchangeable. I make a distinction which I think Resistance Theology is reluctant to make: a "fallen" power can still serve minimal human ends, even though it must still be called to a more redemptive purpose; a demonic power has forfeited its right to exist and must be resisted. A theological and ethical position needs to be able to make discriminating distinctions between "fallen" and "demonic" powers.

A final criticism returns us to the issue of Christ's Lordship. When early Christians confessed Christ as Lord of the "powers," they were according the exalted Christ the functions which earlier Jews had accorded God when they called Yahweh "Lord of hosts." The Christological confession functions to combine the creative, preserving and redemptive purposes of God. What God is doing in redemption through Christ is not discontinuous with what he did and is doing in his creative and preserving power. This confession prohibits a dualism between the material world and the spiritual world or between God the Creator and God the Redeemer.

H. Richard Niebuhr sought carefully to do theology and ethics based on the Trinity rather than just on the second person of the Trinity. God as Creator and Preserver and Redeemer was the foundation of his ethics.[110] Reinhold Niebuhr, drawing upon his brother, once criticized Campbell and Holloway for deriving their ethics solely from the Christological principle and not the Trinitarian principle.[111] I think it is a sound critique of Resistance Theology in general. In their theology grace is exalted at nature's expense, redemption is exalted at the expense of creation and preservation, and Christ's Lordship is exercised so much in contradiction to history that his present Lordship is left in doubt.

Despite the criticisms leveled here, Resistance Theology is an important and authentic theological voice. It offers an important picture of Christian life as a pure witness to the kingdom, a heroic ethic not determined by consequential criteria. As such it is a scandal to realistic ethics. Michael Novak, for example, mounts a "Niebuhrian" attack on what he sees as the morally absolutistic character of the ethic of Berrigan and Stringfellow.[112] He further attacks the ineffectiveness of their witness. He condemns the Catonsville act as "a parable, a puzzle, a tease, a torment."[113] I can see Daniel Berrigan's impish grin now, as he would retort, "Of course." Resistance theology confronts us again with that key ethical issue of the relation between means and ends.

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[110] H. Richard Niebuhr, The Responsible Self (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 6-41, as introduced by James M. Gustafson.

[111] Katallagete: Be Ye Reconciled (Winter, 1967-68), inside cover.

Resistance Theology also offers to America a critique of the dehumanizing character of the "powers." No longer can there be hymns to the secular city, litanies to technology, or poems to man "come of age." It serves as a critique of American social idealism. It serves as an important witness to an ethic of love that in bad times becomes an ethic of resistance. It serves as a rebuke to the comfortable peace-treaties Christians make with the world. It reminds us that Christian ethics need not slip into moral cynicism or cultural accommodation.

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[112] Michael Novak, "Unmasking the Movement," Christianity and Crisis, 30 (Nov. 30, 1970), pp. 257-258; Stringfellow's reply is on p. 259.

[113] Michael Novak, "The Oranging of the Berrigan," The Christian Century, 160 (April 17, 1974), p. 419; Robert McAfee Brown replied to Novak, "A Symbol is a Symbol is a Symbol," The Christian Century, 160 (May 22, 1974), pp. 563-566 and Novak's response to Brown, "A Symbol is Sometimes a Cymbal," The Christian Century, 160 (May 22, 1974), p. 567.

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Chapter 6

THE BLACK LIBERATION THEOLOGY OF JAMES CONE: CHRIST CONQUERING THE POWERS

The turbulence of the sixties in America evoked a theological voice which found resonance with a world-wide theological movement: liberation theology. In America liberation theology is mainly comprised of black theology and women's theology. As the representative of liberation theology in the American context this chapter will study the Black Theology of Liberation of James Cone. Cone is an appropriate choice for two reasons: 1) As one of the first American liberation theologians his work has had time to develop in response to criticism from both the academic theological community and also his black church community; and 2) since liberation theology is a theology of and for the oppressed, the black community in America is a prime context for liberation theology. Indeed, Cone asserts that for theology in America to be Christian it must be _black_ theology.

James Cone is the most prolific and conspicuous of the black theologians in America.[1] Among the other large branch of American liberation theologians, women's theology, the leaders include Mary Daly, Letty Russell and Rosemary Radford Reuther.[2] There are a few white men doing liberation theology of whom the most visible is Frederick Herzog.[3] The American liberation theologies are closely related to liberation theology being done in Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Jürgen Moltmann is the leading European liberation theologian.[4] Latin America is probably the most fertile context of liberation theology today. Its leaders include Rubem Alves, Gustavo Gutierrez, Juan Luis Segundo and José Miranda.[5]

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[1] James H. Cone's major works to this time are _Black Theology and Black Power_ (new York: Seabury Press, 1969), hereafter designated _BTBP_; _A Black Theology of Liberation_ (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1970), hereafter designated _BTL_; _The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation_ (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), hereafter designated _SB_; _God of the Oppressed_ (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), hereafter designated _GO_; other black theologians include C. Eric Lincoln, Joseph Washington, Albert Cleage, Cecil Cone, J. Deotis Roberts and Major Jones.

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[2] Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); Letty Russell, Human Liberation in a Reminist Perspective - A Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), ed., The Liberating Word: A Guide to Non-Sexist Interpretation of the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); Rosemary Radford Ruether, Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power (New York: Paulist Press, 1972) and New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

[3] Frederick Herzog, Liberation Theology: Liberation in the Light of the Fourth Gospel (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972); and, ed., Theology of the Liberating Word (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). Herzog agrees with liberation theology's central affirmation that the question of God is primarily related to the question of oppression, and is, as few white male theologians are, intimately involved in critical dialogue with black, women, and Latin American theologians. Cone commends Herzog's theology over that of other American theologians doing liberation or political theology, e.g., Paul Lehmann, Richard Schaull, Carl Braaten, because the former makes liberation of the oppressed his starting point (GO, pp. 50 and 257).

[4] Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); and The Crucified God (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); and The Church in the Power of the Spirit (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

[5] Rubem Alves, A Theology of Human Hope (Washington: Corpus, 1969); and Tomorrow's Child (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1973); Juan Luis Segundo, Our Idea of God (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1974); and Liberation of Theology (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1976); José Porfirio Miranda, Being and the Messiah: The Message of St. John (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1973).

Eschatological theology shares much with liberation theology. One can probably say that most liberation theologians are eschatological theologians though the converse is not true. Both theologies give the future a major place in their doctrines of God and history. They share a view of history which is open and moving toward transformation through the power of God. The character of history's movement can be seen quite differently, however. For example, one can contrast Teilhard de Chardin's "evolutionary monism" and Jürgen Moltmann's "revolutionary dualism."[6] Liberation theology would favor the latter. Liberation theology sees history as a straight line oriented toward the eschaton, or the "new," as opposed to the view of history as a circle oriented toward "eternal return."[7]

Liberation theology affirms the primary importance of history and its possibility for transformation. Alves begins A Theology of Human Hope: "Man is a historical being . . . . Man changes . . . . He is open."[8] Liberation theology would be less cosmological or metaphysical and more historically oriented than some eschatological theologies. Catchwords in both theologies are "the new," the "future," and "freedom."

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[6] This is Carl Braaten's apt distinction delineated in his Christ and Counter-Christ: Apocalyptic Themes in Theology and Culture (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 9. For an excellent analysis of eschatological theology's view of history in comparison with that of Reinhold Niebuhr see Langdon Gilkey, "Reinhold Niebuhr's Theology of History" in The Legacy of Reinhold Niebuhr, Nathan A. Scott, Jr., ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 36-62.

[7] This is José Miranda's distinction in Being and the Messiah, (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1973), chapter three and pp. 196-200.

[8] (New York: Corpus Books, 1969), p. 3.

Liberation theology would distinguish itself with a more "Marxist" tone. This influence does not mean ideological enslavement to Marxist theory, but rather the use of Marx as an analytic tool.[9] Analyzing the "Theology in Americas" Conference on liberation theology in Detroit in 1975, Beverly Harrison noted that the Latin American liberation theologians' use of Marx meant that analysis of global economic realities and class structure was essential in the theological task.[10]

Using global and class analyses, the primary reference of liberation theology is the reality of oppression and the liberation of oppressed peoples. Sometimes the distinction between God and the human struggle for liberation is blurred. Frederick Herzog insisted at the Detroit conference that a clear differentiation be made between God's action in history and the human struggle for liberation. The Latin American theologians' response was, in Harrison's words,

> . . . that they would accept no paradigm of God's transcendence that did not emerge from the world-historical struggle for human freedom, nor any account of divine transcendence that dichotomized God's action and human historical agency.[11]

The historical and anthropocentric emphasis is an important characteristic of liberation theology. It points to God as the source of saving liberation but never apart from human efforts in history.

The Black Liberation Theology of James Cone is a most appropriate representative of liberation theology in America. In his theology can be seen a unique position relating Christ and the "powers." It can be termed Christ conquering the "powers." Christ is combating the "powers" with power; the goal is the transformation of the "powers." In some ways it combines some features of the Social Gospel, Christian Realism and Resistance Theology. It has the transformation motif of the first, the realism about the reality of power of the second, and the radical "againstness" of the third. Cone relates his own theology to H. Richard Niebuhr's "Christ and Culture" typology. He aligns himself with the conversionist position, or "Christ transforming Culture."[12] He, however, criticizes Niebuhr for defining Christ apart from the proper starting point: his identity with the oppressed.[13] Moreover, he criticizes Niebuhr's definition of culture which is too broad and lacks the specificity of dealing with the issue of oppressors and the oppressed, of whites and blacks.[14] In short, there are two cultures: the oppressors' culture and the culture of the oppressed. Christ is against the former and for the latter. In terms of our theme on Christ and the "powers," Cone's position will be shown to look like this: Christ is against the "powers" because the "powers' most often represent the oppressor; but Christ is winning the battle of transforming them so that both oppressor and the oppressed are set free. Christ is conquering the "powers."

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[9] Robert McAfee Brown, "Reflections on Detroit," Christianity and Crisis, 35 (October 27, 1975), p. 255.

[10] Beverly W. Harrison, "Challenging the Western Paradigm: The Theology in the Americas' Conference," Christianity and Crisis, 35 (October 27, 1975), pp. 252-253.

[11] Harrison, p. 256.

JAMES CONE: HIS LIFE AND THEOLOGICAL METHOD

James Cone grew up in Bearden, Arkansas, a small community of around 800 whites and 400 blacks. It was this socio-political setting which formed the early context for Cone's theological awareness. He admits:

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[12] See Cone's incisive analysis of Niebuhr's Christ and Culture typology in GO, pp. 85-91.

[13] GO, p. 89.

[14] GO, p. 90.

> More often than not, it is a theologian's personal history, in a particular socio-political setting, that serves as the most important factor in shaping the methodology and the content of his or her theological perspective.[15]

The two most important realities which shaped Cone's consciousness were: "the black Church experience and the socio-political influence of white people."[16] Growing up in the Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church, he was nurtured in the rhythm and meaning of the black religious experience. There he encountered the divine Spirit and was filled with the aspiration for freedom. His church taught him to deal with the contradictions of life and provided meaning in a culture not of his making. He joined in the singing of songs like "Sooner-a-will be done with the trouble of this world." Unfortunately he also experienced the dehumanizing world of whites which sought to define his "place," put him there and keep him there.[17]

These experiences provided primary data for his Black Theology:

> I therefore must approach the subject of theology in the light of the black Church and what that means in a society dominated by white people.[18]

Cone received a classical theological education, learning the history of theology and doing papers on men like Bultmann and Tillich. He concluded his formal education with a dissertation on the anthropology of the theologian he studied most, Karl Barth.[19] It was not until he left Garrett Theological Seminary, however, and began teaching at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas, that he felt the contradictions between his seminary education and the deepest needs of his black students. They turned him toward the rediscovery of his black religious roots. The conflict between his classical theological training and black religious experience reached a climax during the race riots in the 1960's. The inability of white theologians to respond correctly to this crisis revealed for him a "theological bankruptcy." Theological education had not prepared white theologians to deal with Watts, Detroit, and Newark.[20]

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[15] GO, p. vi.

[16] GO, p. 1.

[17] GO, pp. 1-2.

[18] GO, p. 5.

[19] GO, p. 5.

His theological crisis carried him back to the scriptures and on to the writing of his first book, Black Theology and Black Power.[21] In this provocative, angry book Cone called Black Power a mighty act of God to destroy white racism. Black Power, so Cone argued,

> . . . means complete emancipation of black people from white oppression by whatever means black people deem necessary.[22]

He asserted that the goal and message of Black Power is consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ.[23] Black Power shares with Christ the task of liberating the oppressed from slavery and the oppressor from the "demons" of his racist attitudes and social structures.[24] Cone has kept from this time on the realism and militancy of the Black Power movement.

Cone's second book, A Black Theology of Liberation,[25] works out his theological questions within the context of the classical structures of theology.[26] He identifies the liberation motif as the central one:

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[20] GO, p. 6.

[21] BTBP, op. cit.

[22] BTBP, p. 6.

[23] BTBP, p. 48.

[24] BTBP, pp. 42-43.

[25] BTL, op. cit.

[26] This work is for black liberation theology what by analogy Rauschenbusch's A Theology For the Social Gospel was for the Social Gospel.

"Christianity is essentially a religion of liberation."[27] Moreover, in a society where men are oppressed because they are black, "Christian theology must become Black Theology . . . ."[28] His third book, The Spirituals and the Blues,[29] investigates the theological significance of the black experience as reflected in sermons, spirituals, and blues (which he calls secular spirituals). His latest work, God of the Oppressed, deals with the social basis of theology and is concerned among other issues with the problem of the particular and the universal in theological discourse.[30]

Cone's Black Theology of Liberation identifies the central activity of God and work of Christ in liberating the oppressed from the powers of injustice and racism. The content of theology is liberation.[31] The God of Israel and Father of Jesus Christ is the God of and for the downtrodden. God's essential character is his righteousness, his "active involvement in history, making right what men have made wrong."[32] The Black Theology of Liberation is Christian theology for two reasons: 1) "there can be no theology of the gospel which does not arise from an oppressed community;" and, 2) Black Theology centers on Jesus Christ who is at work among the oppressed black community.[33] Black theology is the theology done in the midst of the oppressed is survival theology[34] whose form is passionate language.[35] The sources of Black Theology are black experience, black history, black culture, revelation,[36] scripture, and tradition. The norm of Black Theology takes seriously two aspects of a single reality: the liberation of black people and the revelation of Jesus Christ. The norm, then, of Black Theology is "the manifestation of Jesus as the Black Christ who provides the necessary soul for black liberation."[37]

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[27] BTL, p. 11. [28] BTL, p. 11. [29] SB, op. cit.

[30] GO, p. 7. The social basis issue answers black critics who contend that Cone's primary reference is white European theology. The universal/particular issue answers the objections of white theologians to the chromatic particularity of his theological language.

[31] BTL, p. 17. [32] BTL, p. 19.

[33] BTL, pp. 23-24. [34] BTL, pp. 34-45.

The Black Christ: His Person and Work

> Softly to the little stable
> Softly for a moment come;
> Look and see how charming is Jesus,
> How he is white, his cheeks are rosy . . . . (Pilgrim Hymnal)[38]
>
> Jesus is the Black Christ. (James Cone)[39]
>
> as regards his Godhead,
> begotten of the Father before all ages,
> but yet as regards his manhood
> begotten for us men and for our
> salvation, of Mary the Virgin. (Chalcedon, 451)[40]
>
> He don't come before time; he don't come after time.
> He just comes on time. (Ex-Slave)[41]

The heart of James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation is his Christology. Having cut his theological teeth on Karl Barth and Dietrich

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[35] BTL, pp. 45-49.

[36] Defined by Cone as "God making himself known to man through a historical act of liberation." (BTL, p. 64.)

[37] BTL, p. 80. [38] Pilgrim Hymnal (Boston, 1966), p. 124.

[39] BTL, p. 215.

[40] Documents of the Christian Church, Henry Bettenson, ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 73.

[41] Jesus as the "time-God" in Clifton H. Johnson, ed., God Struck Me Dead (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1969), p. 170, as cited in GO, p. 35.

Bonhoeffer, Cone joins them in working from a Christocentric starting point and hermeneutic.[42] His Christology is not an abstract intellectualized pursuit, however. It is so concrete and particularistic that he calls Jesus the Black Christ. Indeed, in Cone's theology, "blackness" is a Christological title for our time and place, just as "Son of God" or "Son of David" were for other times and places.[43]

To confess Jesus as the Black Christ departs somewhat from traditional Christology. For Cone traditional Christologies are important, but their questions may not be the most important questions for Christology today, particularly for black Americans. He affirms Athanasius' work:

> But the homoousia question is not a black question . . . . They (blacks) ask whether Jesus is walking with them, whether they can call him up on the "telephone of prayer" and tell him all about their troubles.[44]

Who is Jesus Christ for us today? The crux of the Christological issue for Cone is the question, Who is Jesus Christ for us today?[45] The particularity and concreteness of his Black Theology pertain also to his Christology. It is a Christology done for and by the black community. While we may be startled by Cone's picture of Christ as black, Cone reminds white theologians of their perversion of Christ:

> For too long Christ has been pictured as a blue-eyed honky. Black theologians are right: we need to dehonkify him . . . .[46]

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[42] BTBP, p. 34; BTL, p. 197; GO, p. 81.

[43] GO, p. 135.

[44] GO, p. 14.

[45] GO, p. 108. At this point he shares an emphasis with Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

[46] BTL, p. 61.

The starting point of the key Christological question is the interplay of social context with scripture and tradition.[47] The practical question concerning Christ arises in the struggle for freedom from oppression. It becomes a Christological question as Christ himself breaks into our social existence "establishing the truth of freedom in our midst."[48] The context of Cone's Christology is the black community's struggle for freedom. For that reason he warns white readers that an authentic reading of his theology is dependent upon "the blackness of their existence," their identification with the oppressed.[49]

Since Christian theology "begins and ends with Jesus Christ"[50] and since he agrees with Barth and Pannenberg on the centrality of Christology in Christian theology, Cone orients his theology around Jesus Christ. His investigation of this Christ prompts him to take with utmost seriousness the historical Jesus. He affirms the "new quest" of the historical Jesus which seeks to recover the history of Jesus. "We want to know who Jesus _was_ because we believe that that is the only way to assess who he _is_."[51] Anxious to avoid the charge of subjectivism in his theology, Cone wants to determine clearly the character of the life and words of Jesus of Nazareth. History is, for Cone, "the indispensable foundation of Christology." He warns us, while fending off critics' questions,

> We are not free to make Christ what we wish him to be at certain moments of existence. He _is_ who he _was_ . . . . Black Theology takes seriously Pannenberg's comment that "faith primarily has to do with what Jesus was."[52]

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[47] _GO_, p. 108.
[48] _GO_, p. 109.
[49] _BTL_, p. 12.
[50] _BTL_, p. 197.
[51] _BTL_, p. 201.
[52] _BTL_, p. 212.

He distinguishes his Christology from Pannenberg's by its contemporary reference and by its soteriological orientation: "the soteriological value of Christ's person must finally determine our Christology."[53]

Jesus as the Oppressed One. The "historical kernel" of Christology is "the manifestation of Jesus as the Oppressed One whose earthly existence was bound up with the oppressed of the land."[54] Affirming other "new quests," Cone asserts that Jesus' conduct (Fuchs), eschatological words and deeds (Bornkamm), and resurrection (Pannenberg) all serve to "illuminate Jesus' sole reason for existence: to bind the wounds of the afflicted and to liberate those who are in prison."[55] This is the meaning of Jesus as the "Black Christ."

Cone describes Jesus as the "Oppressed One" illustrated by his humble birth, his eating with tax collectors and sinners, his identification with sinners in baptism, his repudiation of oppressive power in the temptations, his preaching of the kingdom of God,[56] his identity with the poor, and his death and resurrection.[57] Jesus' kingdom of God "is the rule of God breaking in like a ray of light, usurping the powers that be that hold humans as captives."[58] Jesus' work as the Oppressed One is that of liberating humanity from inhumanity. To set free the oppressed to be what they are is "the meaning of his finality which has been camouflaged in debates about his humanity and divinity."[59]

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[53] BTL, pp. 212-213. [54] BTL, p. 202. [55] BTL, p. 203.

[56] Cone's favorite text is Jesus' inaugural address, Luke 4:18-19.

[57] BTL, pp. 203-211. [58] BTL, p. 209.

[59] BTL, p. 209.

Jesus' death and resurrection consummate his earthly ministry with the poor. They make him more than just a good man who liked the poor:

> The finality of Jesus lies in the totality of his existence in complete freedom as the Oppressed One, who reveals through his death and resurrection that God himself is present in all dimensions of human liberation.[60]

The Christian lives in freedom because he knows that Christ has conquered death and its enslaving power.

As the central Christological question suggests, the meaning of Jesus is not found in the abstract questions of seminary professors but is an existential question:

> We know who he is when our lives are placed in a situation of oppression, and we thus have to make a decision for or against our condition.[61]

To encounter the "Resurrected One" is to say No to oppression and Yes to liberation. Therein is the meaning of the Black Christ. Since the black community is oppressed in its blackness, "the Christological importance of Jesus Christ must be found in his blackness."[62] If the Jesus of scriptures is the Oppressed One, his blackness is the meaning of his presence today. Cone asserts,

> Any statement about Christ today that fails to consider blackness as the decisive factor about his Person is a denial of the New Testament message.[63]

The contemporary significance of Jesus as the Black Christ is that he is for the poor and against the rich, for the oppressed and against the oppressor. This means that Jesus is the "complete opposite of the values of white culture."[64]

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[60] BTL, p. 210. [61] BTL, p. 213. [62] BTL, p. 213.

[63] BTL, p. 214. [64] BTL, p. 215.

The meaning of Christ as the "Incarnate One" is clarified by the title of "blackness." In Jesus God becomes "the oppressed man."[65] Cone's theology of Incarnation is not metaphysical; it is ethical. It concerns where God is at work, not where he "is" or how he became man.

Cone admits that some whites will resent the Christological title of the Black Christ. Cone defends it by saying that the concept "black" is the only concept that has real significance today. First century titles mean little today, so Cone adopts blackness as an appropriate interpretation of what those titles meant. "Jesus is Lord" means that he only is Lord and that white people do not have authority over black people.[66] Jesus as the oppressed black man is a proper analogy to Christ as the Suffering Servant of God.

Since Christ's meaning for us today involves the interplay of social context with scriptures and tradition, tradition as well as scripture is considered authoritative.[67] Tradition bridges scripture and our contemporary situation and offers clues for understanding Christ today. But Cone does not accept tradition uncritically. The hermeneutical key of Christ as the Oppressed One evaluates tradition. The validity of Christological formulations is determined by how they deal with the issue of oppression.

The social context at the crux of the Christological question is that of oppression. Therefore it is important for Cone to uncover how Christ has functioned in the black community. Cone has increasingly moved to deal with black religious experience. Jesus' place in the spirituals and blues therefore is an important source for Cone. Black tradition presents Christ's meaning not just in formal church doctrine but also "in the rhythm, the beat, and the swing of life . . .," in spirituals, blues, folklore and sermons.[68]

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[65] BTL, p. 215. [66] BTL, p. 217. [67] GO, p. 113.

In The Spirituals and the Blues Cone identifies the central theological concept in black spirituals as God's liberation of the oppressed from slavery.[69] The Exodus (Moses) and the Exile (Daniel) have provided the setting for many spirituals. Jesus blended easily with the Old Testament drama. According to Cone, Christology and theology "blend imperceptibly" in spirituals: "That is, statements about God are not theologically distinct from statements about Jesus Christ."[70] Jesus in the spirituals is the king, the deliverer, the comforter, "the lily of the valley" and "the bright and morning star." Jesus' work is never separated from his person:

> He's king of kings, and Lord of Lords,
> Jesus Christ, the first and the last
> No man works like him.[71]

But the spirituals avoid abstract theological speculation, for example, the person of Jesus or the ousia question. "Jesus was not the subject of theological questioning."[72] Instead,

> He was perceived in the reality of the black experience, and black slaves affirmed both his divinity and humanity without debating the philosophical question, "How can God become man?"[73]

The divinity of Jesus was unquestioned. The Father and the Son were two ways of talking about the divine presence in the slave community. Indeed, the choice of "Father" or "Son" often depended on the rhythm of the verse instead of on a theological distinction.[74] On the other hand, spirituals pictured the full humanity of Jesus. No docetic Christ, Jesus' suffering and pain and emotions were vividly depicted.

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[68] GO, p. 115.
[69] SB, p. 34.
[70] SB, p. 47.
[71] SB, p. 47.
[72] SB, p. 47.
[73] SB, p. 47.

Oh, dey whupped him up de hill, an' he
never said a mumbalin' word.
He jes' hung down his head an' he cried.[75]

Black spirituals vividly recounted the ministry of Jesus to the poor and enslaved as people yearned for Jesus to do for them what he had done for others:

O Lord, I'm hungry
I want to be fed
. . . .
O feed me Jesus feed me,
Feed me all my days.[76]

The victory of Jesus over death signaled hope for blacks as they sang black spirituals. "Weep no more Martha/Weep no more, Mary/ Jesus rise from de dead/Happy Morning."[77] The Risen Christ was also alive as a present help: "Sometimes I hangs my head an' cries/But Jesus goin' to wipe my weep'n eyes."[78] The resurrection also stood for God's future when he will set things right: "When I gets to heaven, gonna be at ease/Me an' my God gonna do as we please."[79]

Cone evaluates the spirituals positively. He rejects those who interpret them as an "opiate of the people": songs which encouraged blacks to hope for heaven and ignore earthly injustice. The spirituals, rather, were songs of the black struggle for survival. They were "the spirit of the people struggling to be free."[80] They gave life a joyful affirmation in the present despite its cruelties and offered a stubborn hope for the future. "Heaven" was no opiate; it represented the "transcendent present" and the "transcendent future."[81]

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[74] _SB_, p. 48.
[75] _SB_, p. 52.
[76] _SB_, p. 51.
[77] _SB_, p. 54.
[78] _SB_, p. 55.
[79] _SB_, p. 57.
[80] _SB_, p. 32.

Christ: Past, Present and Future

The past, present and future of Jesus are all important in Cone's Christology.

Jesus is who he was. As stated above, Jesus' past as revealed in scriptures is the crucial starting point for Cone. Scripture reveals Christ as the Oppressed One. He starts Christology "from below" with the investigation of the historical Jesus.[82] Without this historical picture we have a docetic Christ who becomes an abstract idea. In regard to who Jesus was, his Jewishness is most important. It places the particularity of Jesus' life within the salvation drama of a God whose will is to liberate the oppressed.

Jesus is who he is. The Living Christ is the present Lord who empowers the oppressed in their struggle for freedom. Christology "from below" (Pannenberg) is not enough but must be dialectically related to Christology "from above" which centers on the existential and soteriological issues.[83] The Jesus who was is now present with us in the struggle for freedom. Jesus is present in black worship "guidin' their feet" and "holdin' their hands" while they "run this race."[84] But he is more than a comforting friend; Jesus is Lord:

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[81] SB, Chapter 5.

[82] GO, p. 116.

[83] GO, p. 121.

[84] GO, p. 123.

> The Lordship of Christ emphasizes his present rule in the lives of people, helping them to struggle for the maintenance of humanity in a situation of oppression. "Jesus is Lord" is an affirmation of his reigning presence, moving the people toward future realization of their humanity.[85]

Jesus is who he will be. The meaning of Jesus is not limited to his past and present, but also to his eschatological future as "the Lord of the future who is coming again to consummate the liberation already happening in our present."[86] Blacks were theologians and politicians of hope long before German hope theology.[87] Jesus represents the "not yet" as well as "already" of the kingdom. Cone's eschatological or hope theology is centered in the question of oppression. He criticizes those white hope theologians who do not make oppression the central issue.[88] Who Jesus is for us today is connected with the "divine future as disclosed in the liberation fight of the poor."[89] "Heaven" and Jesus as the coming Lord and Judge are major themes in black religion. They are not opiates, however, but instead are "inseparably connected with Jesus' promise to liberate the oppressed."[90]

Cone wants to relate dialectically Christ's past, present and future, or Christology "from below" (Pannenberg), "from above" (Barth), and "from before" (Moltmann). The future reality of Jesus is consistently related to his past and present. It gives hope and offers meaning in the woeful present by maintaining "that what is contradicts what ought to be."[91]

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[85] GO, pp. 125-126. [86] GO, p. 126. [87] GO, pp. 126-127.

[88] He noted the international conference on "Hope and the Future of Man" held in N. Y. in 1971 which featured Moltmann, Pannenberg and other hope, process and Teilhardian theologians but which did not include African, Latin American, or black American theologians (GO, p. 128).

[89] GO, p. 129. [90] GO, p. 130. [91] GO, p. 131.

Jesus is Black. Blackness is a Christological title because it unites Jesus' person and work in the present American context of oppression. There is a direct line from Jesus' Jewishness to his blackness: "He is Black because he was a Jew."[92] He thus represents God's abiding concern for the liberation of captives. The resurrection of Jesus means,

> . . . that God's identity with the poor in Jesus is not limited to the particularity of his Jewishness but is applicable to all who fight on behalf of the liberation of humanity in this world.[93]

Cone admits that "blackness" as a Christological title may not be appropriate in another time and place, just as every Christological title is time bound; but its validity is measured by this criteria:

> . . . whether in the particularity of its time it points to God's universal will to liberate particular oppressed people from inhumanity.[94]

Cone explains that Christ's blackness is both literal and symbolic. It is literal in that he becomes "One with the oppressed blacks."[95] It is symbolic in that blackness points to the reality of the oppressed. Cone follows Tillich's description of the symbolic nature of all theological language to conclude that blackness "is an ontological symbol and a visible reality which best describes what oppression means in America."[96] The blackness of Christ is therefore:

> . . . not simply a statement about skin color, but rather, the transcendent affirmation that God has not ever, no not ever, left the oppressed alone in struggle.[97]

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[92] GO, p. 134.

[93] GO, p. 135.

[94] GO, p. 135.

[95] GO, p. 136.

[96] BTL, p. 27.

[97] GO, p. 137.

Christ's Work: Victory over the "Powers"

Cone favors the word liberation to the word reconciliation. Reconciliation connotes for Cone the message of love and forgiveness preached to blacks to keep them under control. Cone angrily warns whites that the blacks are on the "battlefield of the Lord" and will fight for freedom until they die. He wants to make clear "that we will not be distracted from our liberation with their obscene talk about 'love' and 'forgiveness.'"[98]

True reconciliation has an objective and subjective side. On the objective side, reconciliation means that God is on the side of oppressed blacks. It has to do with God's victory over the principalities and powers. On the cross God encounters evil and suffering. The resurrection is the sign that the principalities and powers have been decisively defeated "even though they are still very active in the world."[99] Christians have been given the gift of freedom to fight with God in the liberation struggle against the powers.[100]

Who are the principalities and powers which are still active in the world? Cone says that they are,

> . . . represented concretely in the structures of injustice that oppress the weak and humiliate the poor. They are the demonic forces of white racism that enslave black, red, and brown people . . . .[101]

God's reconciling work is his "liberating work against these powers."[102] Hence the conclusion of Cone's argument is that reconciliation is the "end" of liberating activity. For oppressed blacks, divine reconciliation is joyful liberation from the controlling power of whites. For whites, divine reconciliation is "connected with God's wrathful destruction of white values."[103]

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[98] GO, p. 246.

[99] GO, p. 236.

[100] GO, p. 236.

[101] GO, p. 236.

[102] GO, p. 236.

On the human, subjective side, reconciliation means that blacks must accept their new existence by struggling against all who wish to enslave them. There can be no master/slave communication or reconciliation until the status of master is destroyed.[104] He argues against black theologians who, like J. Deotis Roberts, urge blacks to live by love and forgiveness.[105] There can be no forgiveness without repentence; and for whites this repentence is a dying to whiteness and rebirth into the struggle against the white oppressor.[106]

The heart of Christ's work as the Oppressed One is his liberation of the oppressed. It is more than spiritual or psychological liberation. It means the transformation of society:

> There is no liberation without transformation . . . . without the commitment of revolutionary action against injustice, slavery, and oppression.[107]

Jesus Christ, Revolutionary Action and Violence

In the battle between Christ and the powers, the question of the means or of the "weapons" used is important. Cone is highly provocative when the issue of violence is raised. Does he advocate the use of violence to combat oppression? How is the Christian's action related to Jesus' own choices concerning violence? In short, how does Cone relate ethics to his Christocentric theology? For the Christian, how are means and ends related?

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[103] GO, p. 237.
[104] GO, p. 278.
[105] GO, p. 279.
[106] GO, p. 242.
[107] GO, p. 152.

Cone raises questions when he identifies Christ's work and Black Power. The Black Christ defines black values which means "that blacks are free to do what they have to do in order to affirm their humanity."[108] He intensifies the questions by quoting Moltmann:

> The problem of violence and non-violence is an illusory problem. There is only the question of the justified and the unjustified use of force and the question of whether the means are proportionate to the ends.[109]

The issue of violence comes to fore where the liberating activity of Christians includes revolution and the transformation and reconstruction of social structures.[110] Cone's answer on the question of violence is important to understand.

When people ask him how the advocacy of violence for just ends relates to Jesus' repudiation of violence, Cone immediately returns that such questions are white questions.[111] Whites are not concerned about violence in all cases but only where they are victims.[112] When asked "Are you for violence?" Cone replies, "Whose violence?" "The Mississippi State Police or the students at Jackson State?" "The New York State Police or the inmates at Attica?"[113] Christianity has never dealt fairly with the violence question because it has identified primarily with the structures of power instead of the victims of power. Cone counters with a three part argument: 1) Violence is part of the structure of society; "violence is," as Rap Brown said, "as American as cherry pie."[114] Violence is not a problem for black revolutionaries but for the whole society. 2) Violence versus non-violence is not the question, rather it is the creation of a new humanity.[115] 3) Therefore, the critical question is not whether Jesus was violent or non-violent or whether violence is consistent with love and reconciliation. The correct question is not what Jesus _did_, "as if his behavior in the first century is the infallible ethical guide for our actions today."[116] The correct question is what Jesus _is doing_ today. To use the Jesus of history as an absolute ethical guide enslaves us to the past and denies God's eschatological future. Cone asserts:

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[108] BTL, p. 219.

[109] Cited in Cone, "Black Theology on Revolution, Violence, and Reconciliation," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 31 (Fall, 1975), p. 11, hereafter designated BTRVR.

[110] GO, p. 195.

[111] Cone's treatment on violence is found mainly in BTRVR, op. cit., and in GO, pp. 195-225.

[112] GO, pp. 195-196.

[113] GO, p. 196.

> . . . even if it could be shown that Jesus was not a revolutionary Zealot, that in itself would not be evidence that the risen Christ is not in the oppressed's struggle of freedom today. For the resurrected Christ is not bound by first-century possibilities.[117]

The risk of Christian freedom is making decisions about liberation "without being completely sure what Jesus did or would do."[118] Jesus' historical activity is a _pointer_ to what he is doing and since he is for the liberation of the oppressed, what creates liberation today is what Jesus _is doing_.[119]

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[114] _BTRVR_, p. 11.

[115] _BTRVR_, p. 12.

[116] _BTRVR_, p. 12; _GO_, p. 222.

[117] _GO_, p. 223; Cone's assessment of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s thought is a criticism of King's advocacy of non-violence and admiration for his political activism and preaching (_GO_, pp. 221-222).

[118] _BTRVR_, p. 12.

[119] _BTRVR_, p. 12.

Cone builds on Paul Lehmann's _koinonia_ _ethic_ to say that the _only_ true _koinonia_ in which we can know God's will and what he is doing is the _koinonia_ of the oppressed.[120] The kingdom of God means the "revolutionary usurpation of the present value system."[121] Our decision is:

> . . . not between good and evil, right and wrong, but between the old and the new age, the former being represented in the oppressors and the latter in the struggle of the little ones to be free.[122]

God's will and activity are "always identical with those who strive for a liberated freedom."[123] The concrete goal of God's liberation is "changing the political, economic, and social structures so that distinctions between rich and poor, oppressed and oppressors, are no longer a reality."[124]

From Black Christology to Black Theology

Cone's theology moves consistently from his Christology. God is a "God of the Oppressed." As Jesus is black, "God is Black."[125] Using Trinitarian language Cone explains,

> . . . Black Theology says that as Father, God identified with oppressed Israel participating in the bringing into being of this people; as Son, he became the Oppressed One in order that all may be free from oppression; as Holy Spirit, he continues his work of liberation.[126]

Cone seeks carefully to balance God's love with God's righteousness. It is God's righteousness that restores justice and brings liberation. His wrath is the form of his love in the fight for liberation.[127] God as Creator confirms that the oppressed man is "free to revolutionize the society, assured that his acts of liberation are the work of God himself."[128] God's immanence means that the divine is revealed in concrete historical reality; God's transcendence "prevents us from deifying our own experiences . . . ."[129]

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[120] _GO_, pp. 206f.

[121] _GO_, p. 224.

[122] _GO_, p. 224.

[123] _GO_, p. 225.

[124] _BTRVR_, p. 14.

[125] _BTL_, p. 121.

[126] _BTL_, p. 122.

[127] _BTL_, pp. 125-138.

Cone's anthropology also derives from his Christology. Man is a free being. As a "being in freedom" he rebels against all forms of slavery.[130] The being of man as freedom is the imago dei.[131] Freedom is not, remarks Cone, "white middle-class individualism." Rather, it is throwing in one's lot with the cause of the oppressed, identifying with the victims of evil.[132]

Cone's doctrine of sin and of man as a fallen creature centers in the community context. Sin is not located in an abstract ethical code but in a living community. It is not disobeying laws alien to a community's life; rather, it is the denial of the values of the community which insure its existence. To be in sin means to deny the community and live according to one's private selfish interests.[133] Sin "denies the essence of God's liberating activity as revealed in Jesus Christ."[134] The sin of white people is the definition of life in terms of whiteness. It is responsible for "Indian reservations, black concentration camps, and the rape of Vietnam."[135]

Eschatology and Liberation

Cone's eschatological ethic is not the belief that society is moving automatically towards progress. This is an ideological illusion of the comfortable classes. The church in the power of God "must be a revolutionary community, breaking laws that destroy persons."[136] The church enters the eschatological struggle with the powers with an "already" and "not yet" tension. It proclaims divine liberation from the evil powers and it shares in the struggle for liberation. In Cone's words,

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[128] BTL, p. 141; emphasis mine.

[129] BTL, pp. 142-143.

[130] BTL, pp. 159-160.

[131] BTL, p. 164.

[132] BTL, pp. 170ff.

[133] BTL, pp. 186f.

[134] BTL, p. 190.

[135] BTL, p. 192.

> Though the battle against evil has been won, old rulers pretend that they are still in power. They are still trying to enforce the laws of the old order. The function of the church is to remind them that they are no longer in power.[137]

For blacks this means that white society's values are no longer important. Christ has set us free from "all alien loyalties."[138]

The world is the concrete place where oppression takes place. To affirm Christ's Lordship "means that the world stands under his judgment."[139] It means every person and place are subject to his rule. The church is the visible representative of his Lordship and is engaged in the fight against evil.[140] This is the eschatological struggle.

Coming from a black tradition whose eschatology has been called other-worldly or escapist, Cone strongly insists on the relevance of eschatology in the struggle for liberation.[141] God's future is important for the poor and oppressed. God's future belongs to the future of the poor, "the people who are assured that God's present righteousness will not be defeated by those who seek to usurp divine authority."[142]

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[136] BTL, p. 230. [137] BTL, p. 231. [138] BTL, p. 232.

[139] BTL, p. 235. [140] BTL, p. 235.

[141] From his earliest works (e.g., BTBP, pp. 121ff.), Cone has refuted the "white lie" that Christianity is an other-worldly religion.

[142] BTL, p. 243.

Cone affirms Moltmann's "theology of hope" to be compatible with Black Theology[143] as it emphasizes the meaning of hope for the present tasks of liberating the captives.

Eschatology energizes Christians to transform society and to create new values in line with the new age. The resurrection of Jesus is our eschatological hope which has contemporary consequences:

> As long as we look at the resurrection of Christ and the expected "end," we cannot reconcile ourselves to the things of the present that contradict his presence.[144]

This is the eschatological emphasis of Black Theology.

The eschatological battle with the "powers" has "already" and "not yet" dimensions. The "already" dimension Cone calls "liberation as the project of freedom in history."[145] This project of freedom includes revolution to topple "powers" of injustice. Liberation also means the fight for civil justice to correspond with divine justice; therefore, it includes Martin Luther King, Jr. as well as Malcolm X.

Liberation "is the opposite of the policeman, the judge, and that system which may be loosely described as 'white folks' and in the New Testament is called the principalities and powers."[146] Liberation is calling what enslaves _man_ in life inhuman and is the willingness "to do what is necessary to break the chains."[147] Liberation is "self determination" in a history of "historical possibilities."[148]

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[143] _BTL_, pp. 244-246. Cone quotes Moltmann in describing eschatology not as merely salvation of the soul, but as "the realization of the eschatological _hope_ of _justice_, the _humanizing_ of man, the _socializing_ of humanity, _peace_ for all creation," (cited in _BTBP_, p. 126).

[144] _BTL_, p. 246. [145] _GO_, pp. 152-157. [146] _GO_, p. 155.

[147] _GO_, p. 156. [148] _GO_, p. 156.

Liberation, however, is not just grim activism. It is the life of joy as God's people. The presentness of this joy is a "realized" eschatological gift.[149]

The "not yet" dimension of eschatology Cone calls "liberation as the project of freedom in hope."[150] Although liberation is concerned with historical realizations, it is not limited to the possibilities in history. The future of the oppressed lies not in their own hands, but in the promises of God. The rhythm, dance and ecstacy of black people are "derived from the depths of the 'not yet.'"[151] Blacks are not enslaved to the powers of law and death which are historical "powers." They are set free to fight for liberation in history since liberation is not limited to history and includes what lies beyond history.[152]

CONCLUSION

Cone's Black Theology of Liberation can be summarized according to our four theological motifs. His position on Christ and the "powers" is Christ conquering the "powers." Christ is the Oppressed One who is leading the "wretched of the earth" to try to "set afoot a new man."[153] The "powers" are the structures of injustice and racism which victimize the oppressed. They must be overthrown and replaced with structures which reflect the "new man."

The eschatological battle. The oppressed are soldiers in God's army engaged in the eschatological battle with the "powers." The "already" dimension is the decisive victory over the "powers" at the cross/resurrection. The decisive victory has initiated the church's struggle with the "powers" who while defeated still wage their war against God. The "already" also stands for the historical present wherein victories over the "powers" are won. The "not yet" dimension of the eschatological battle stands for the critical judgment of God on the present inhumanities and for the forms of liberation beyond history which give vision to the struggle within history. Cone's eschatology is a transformationist view of history without being a liberal progressive scheme.

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[149] GO, p. 157. [150] GO, pp. 157-162. [151] GO, p. 159.

[152] GO, p. 160. [153] GO, p. 151; Franz Fanon's phrases.

Christ as Lord over the "powers." Christ's Lordship reflects his "objective" victory over the powers which energizes the present battle with the "powers." It means that Christ alone is Lord and that no other humans or "powers" can be lords over others. It means that history is the realm where Christ exercises his Lordship and power. Cone does not talk of Christ's Lordship over the "powers" in an ontological or metaphysical sense whereby the authority of the "powers" is grounded in Christ or in God. The "law and order" function of the "powers" has no divine sanction. Rather, it has an evil connotation. "Law and order" stands for the evil old order which enforces with violence its master/slave structures. Christ is Lord of the "powers" as a critical norm and not as a sanction for the authority of the "powers."

The "powers" as fallen. The principalities and powers in Cone's thought stand for the corrupt oppressive structures and realities in the world. They have no positive function. The liberation struggle has a revolutionary purpose: the overthrow of the evil "powers." Sin or fallenness stands for those values which oppress communities and destroy communities.

The powers as demonic. Cone, like Rauschenbusch and Resistance theology, makes little or no distinction between fallenness, or sin, on the one hand, and evil, or the demonic, on the other. They both manifest themselves in injustice and oppression. The definition of the good or the divine is in terms of "freedom." There is no sense of law or order being forms of justice. Good and evil are synonymous respectively with freedom and oppression. In short, it is a theology of the oppressed. The issue of the sustenance of justice is not raised. To use Paul Lehmann's terms, Cone's emphasis is on making human life human instead of keeping human life human.

Black Theology as Liberation Theology

The Black Theology of Cone illustrates these characteristics of liberation theology:

1) The primacy of the social context of oppression. The key question of existence revolves around the polarities of master/slave or oppression/freedom. In America this issue is primarily the black/white polarity.

2) The canon within the Canon which is located in the biblical motifs of Exodus, social justice, Jesus' identification with the poor, and his resurrection as a vindication of the oppressed.

3) The eschatological emphasis which sees history as open and moving through the power of God's future and his human agency toward transformation of history. The utopian dream of the "new" is the goal.

4) The use of Marx as an analytic tool in providing theology with a global dimension and an economic/class analysis.

5) A rejection of "Christian realism" as an "ideology of the

establishment (Alves)."[154] A political theology which talks of realistic consequences presupposes a "givenness" to the present structures of history. Liberation theology envisions a "new" future in its utopian form of thought. "Realism" always functions conservatively, and in the interests of the oppressor.

Cone's Theology: A Critique

Asking critical questions as a white man of Cone causes some trepidation. My criticisms are hopefully made in the spirit of humility and self-criticism. That is to say, I question myself as I question Cone. Since Cone allows the possibility that I can repent of my "whiteness" and begin to "think black," to use Herzog's phrase,[155] perhaps I can in the spirit of repentance, which is a gift of the Spirit, initiate a critical dialogue without ideological self-interest. If not, we both do theology in "bad faith."

Method. To Cone's credit, his theology has no hidden agenda. He calls us to "show our hands," and we see all the cards in his deck. We first question Cone concerning the authority of black experience in his theology. It appears more than merely one of several "sources"; its integral place in his "norm" gives it authoritative significance. One of Cone's most ardent supporters, Frederick Herzog, asks whether

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[154] Rubem A. Alves, "Christian Realism: Ideology of the Establishment," Christianity and Crisis, 33 (September 17, 1973), pp. 173-176. While these are Alves' words, the critique is standard in the debate between "Christian Realism" and liberation theology.

[155] Liberation Theology, op. cit., pp. 15 and 61ff. To "think white" is to turn in upon our Cartesian self in navel-gazing. To "think black" is to think from the perspective of the underdog and to give up our "glorious white self-image."

Cone repeats white theologians' error of making their own experience authoritative.[156] Indeed, is Cone replicating the anthropocentrism of Schleiermacher and other nineteenth century liberal theologians? Is Karl Barth's critique of the latter applicable to Cone? Cone's contention is that we do theology dialectically between God's Word and the social context and that it is impossible to separate the two. Our question to Cone as to method asks: is your theology only a projection (Feuerbach); is it only an ideology of the oppressed? Cone answers the question by claiming that his norms come from scripture and that the identification of God with the oppressed is one of God's initiative and not of the oppressed community.[157] The question still stands as to whether Christ or the black struggle for freedom is primary in his hermeneutic. As he considers biblical texts Cone constructs a canon within the Canon based on its congeniality with the struggle of the oppressed. Nowhere, for example, does he deal with Romans 13:1-7.

Christology. I join Cone in affirming the Christological starting point in theology. However, is Jesus Christ actually more of the starting point than black experience in Cone's theology? Cone never wants to divorce the two. But I ask if the social context has determined his picture of Jesus?

The point which can illustrate this crucial question best is the inconsistency in his use of the historical Jesus. Cone strongly argues that in order to avoid subjectivism, our Christology must be established on the historical Jesus. Who Jesus is is the same as who Jesus was. Cone carefully reconstructs the picture of the historical Jesus as the Oppressed One who identified with the poor, outcasts, and sinners. We accept Cone's method, if not all of his conclusions. However, the rub comes when Cone discusses the means to be used in the fight for freedom, or the question of violence. Now Cone says what is important is not what Jesus did but what Jesus is doing. It is not normative whether Jesus refused violence and the Zealot option. What is normative is the creation of new humanity, the goal of the liberating Lord. Can Cone have it both ways? Can he say on one hand who Jesus is is who Jesus was, and, on the other hand, what Jesus is doing is more important than what Jesus did? The method has changed in the second example to one in which the present context of the black struggle for freedom appears more authoritative than what Jesus did.[158] To turn Cone's question back to him, if we cannot know who Jesus is apart from who he was, how can we know what Jesus is doing apart from what he did? What protects Cone's ethics from becoming "ad hoc" ethics?[159]

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[156] Frederick Herzog, ed., Theology of the Liberating Word (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 14.

[157] Cone answers the charge that his theology is ideology in GO, pp. 84-107 and in "Black Theology and Ideology: A Response to my Respondents, Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 31 (Fall, 1975), pp. 71-86.

Cone's Ethics: Revolution and Violence. In Cone's "project of freedom in history" he advocates a path of revolution: whatever it takes to end oppression. He leaves open the use of violence by appealing to the violence already embedded within the structures of society. How can Cone answer the criticism of revolution expressed by Paul Lehmann this way:

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[158] Contrast Cone's position with that of John Howard Yoder, in The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1972), wherein Yoder takes Jesus' decisions vis a vis the Zealots and Rome normatively in Christian ethics; for Yoder, therefore, the Christian life-style follows Jesus' non-violence and refusal to wield power.

[159] Cone's black colleague C. Eric Lincoln asks this question in his "A Perspective on James H. Cone's Black Theology," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 31 (Fall, 1975), p. 21.

> All revolutions aspire to give human shape to the freedom that being and staying human take; and all revolutions end by devouring their own children.[160]

What is to keep the Black revolution from devouring its own children? How is the circle wherein violence begets violence escaped? Does Cone envision a new stage of history wherein the fate of revolutions is evaded? Langdon Gilkey confronts eschatological theology with this question. The issue is:

> . . . whether it is that God promises a new kind of future for history, or whether it is that God will in his own way make meaningful a history in which the human problem as evidenced in past and present experience remains to the end.[161]

The former option is that of eschatological theology and the latter option is Reinhold Niebuhr's theology of history. The contrast is striking. Are we to hope for something absolutely "new" within history, or do we rest upon the inescapable character of sin within history? Liberation theology criticizes Niebuhr's Christian Realism at precisely this point: that it accepts the present historical condition of sin with a degree of "realistic" pessimism which functions as a perpetuator of injustice. Niebuhr would ask whether liberation theology in its utopian dream has succumbed to an illusion about history which has greater dangers than the present injustices: namely, righteous revolution ending in totalitarianism.

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[160] The Transfiguration of Politics (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), p. xiii.

[161] Gilkey, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

Eschatology. Cone's eschatology preserves the already/not yet tension expressed in the New Testament. The eschatologies of Cone and Moltmann are virtually identical.[162] I question whether either can relate meaningfully Creation and Eschatology, the "first things" with the "last things"? The tendency of both is to disparage creation, nature, and the past and present structures of history in favor of the ideal or utopia represented in the "future" or "new things" of God. The radical discontinuity between history and God's kingdom, or between the past/present and the future threatens to snap the tenuous bond which connects them. Is the Creator God the same as the Redeemer God? Their eschatology can aptly be called "revolutionary dualism" (Braaten).[163] Instead of a vertical eschatology which maintains an ontological connection between history and the kingdom of God (Reinhold Niebuhr), a temporal eschatology is assumed which strains the relationship of the present "world" to the future God to a breaking point.[164]

Christ as Lord of the "powers." Cone affirms the objective victory of Christ over the "powers." In my theological perspective this confession means more than that he is their judge. It means that he is their foundation, norm and goal. It affirms with the Colossian hymn, 1:15-20, that they were created through and for Jesus Christ. This theological image restores the link between creation and redemption.

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[162] The two are also close friends. Moltmann has held seminars on Cone's theology; Cone tried valiantly and in vain to persuade Moltmann to accept an invitation to join the Union Seminary Faculty in 1973. See the excellent comparison of black and hope theologies by G. Clarke Chapman, Jr., "Black Theology and Theology of Hope: What Have They to Say to Each Other?" Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 29 (Winter, 1974), pp. 107-129.

[163] See n. 6.

[164] See again Gilkey, op. cit.

The cosmic enthroned Christ is now Lord of the "powers" in an analogous sense as Yahweh was Lord of the "powers" in Old Testament scripture.

In Cone's thought, however, the "powers" are evil powers created by humans. Christ is not so much their Lord, or "head" (Eph. 1:19-23) as he is the apocalyptic judge who comes to cast them into the fiery pit. I acknowledge and affirm much of Cone's description of the evil character of the "powers" in American life. As a member of the oppressed community he sees an oppressive character to the social structures that white middle-class Christians do not see. Revolution, not slight readjustment, is the answer to rats running across your child's bedroom floor. Our question does not argue with his description of the character of the "powers." It asks whether the "powers" can have a positive function in history this side of their divine transfiguration. It asks Cone the meaning of the Christological hymns which confess Christ as the Lord of the "powers," the One through and for whom the "powers" were created and with whom the "powers" are being reconciled. We agree with those who caution against a "realized eschatology" or "theology of glory" which divinize the "powers" by virtue of their Christological foundation. This is neither theologically nor empirically true. We caution Cone against a demonization of the "powers" which flirts with gnosticism and threatens to separate the Creator God and the Redeemer God.

This criticism brings to light another issue. Cone speaks of the objective victory of Christ over the "powers" at the cross/resurrection. But he does not explain the nature of the victory. He does not develop the "Christus Victor" theme as clearly as does Barth or Aulen. Did something actually happen there? Cone seems to focus on the moral significance of the cross/resurrection rather than on an actual victory of some kind. It follows the "moral influence" and liberal stream of atonement theology which talks more of the "meaning" of the event rather than what actually happened at the event. This issue is a difficult one, one at the root of the Morrison/Cullmann debate discussed in Chapter One, and points to an area where more theological exploration is needed.

Fallenness and evil. Cone, as noted above, does not make a clear distinction between the "powers" as fallen and the "powers" as evil. Cone might well call this a "white" distinction, but since Cone is serious about historical transformation and about the establishment and sustenance of justice, the distinction needs to be made. Without it the discriminating judgments necessary between a tolerable and intolerable power structure cannot be easily made. Without it the utopian dream becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of the literal meaning of utopia: "no-place." Without the distinction, the program of freedom has no place to go after the evil "powers" have been destroyed.

A Personal Conclusion

Despite these questions, Cone's Black Theology of Liberation is an important challenge to white theologies which function as an ideology of the oppressor, as a justification of present injustices. It asks whether the American Church is apostate because of its position on racism and oppression. Is Cone right when he says that American white Christianity was "born in heresy" and that the black church's existence is a visible sign of its apostasy?[165] Is he right when he calls our modern and secular theologies a luxury of white affluence?[166]

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[165] BTBP, p. 103.

We can question his method. We can ask whether he has preserved the distinction between God and the life of the oppressed, or between theology and ideology? We can question the scandalous particularity of his "Black Christ," (as first-century Pharisees took offense at Jesus' table fellowship). We can and should question Cone. But we dare not use those questions to insulate ourselves from his question to us: Who is Jesus Christ for us today? Is he the Oppressed One who identifies with the poor and oppressed? If so, who is Jesus Christ for us who built separate but equal schools, who invoked God's blessing on segregated churches, and who painted blue-eyed pictures of Jesus?

Cone's theology makes white Americans angry, guilty, and perhaps even self-righteous. How dare Cone say that God is only a God of the oppressed, a God who sides with the "wretched of the earth" and against the white ruling class. His theology evokes from us a "bad conscience." How will we deal with our "bad conscience"? In anger or self-justification? Will we wallow in penitence? Will we mount a sophisticated theological counter-offensive? I suspect that the righteous God in his justifying work not only sets things right and liberates the oppressed, but also frees the oppressor from a bad conscience so that he can turn from self preoccupation and "let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

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[166] BTL, p. 120. Also Herzog's position, Liberation Theology, op. cit., pp. 10-17.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

Summary

In this dissertation I have interpreted the New Testament "principalities and powers" as social institutions and realities. These social and structural "powers" may exert an objective, or external, force as they become institutionalized or "objectivated." Or, they may exert a subjective, or internal, force through an "internalization" process which shapes the structures of human consciousness. That is, the "powers" may exert external and/or internal control. With the use of a functional hermeneutic, I have identified five groups of "powers": 1) social structures and institutions; 2) ideologies and philosophies; 3) natural, biological, and historical determinants; 4) official titles, roles, and offices; and 5) false determinisms and religious or cultural legalisms.

Through an examination of the major New Testament texts dealing with the "powers," I derived four theological motifs. First, Christ has inaugurated the eschatological battle with the "powers." An eschatological tension is established in history between the "already," that which God in Christ has done, and the "not yet," that which is yet incomplete. The "already" points to the sovereign God at work within history. The "not yet" reminds us of the stubborn rebellion of humankind against God and points us to the future for fulfillment.

Second, Christ is Lord over the "powers." Christ's Lordship must be understood within the eschatological tension elaborated in the first motif. There are already and not yet dimensions to his Lordship. His Lordship also means that the "powers" were created through and for him. This Christological foundation means that their norm and purpose is found in Christ. He is their inner meaning and goal, their genesis and telos. Therefore, we should not be morally cynical about the "powers," nor can we give them up to evil purposes. Since Christ is their Lord, the biblical norms of justice and agape are the critical norms by which we judge the "powers."

Third, the "powers" are fallen. We cannot divinize the "powers" because they have fallen from their Christological vocation. They do not follow the norm of Christ and their calling to "make and keep human life human" (Lehmann). However, even though they are fallen, they still may be exercising the minimum ordering and preserving function for which they were created. We are to call them beyond the minimum to the maximum purpose for which they were created, that is, to the service of Christ and his children in the world.

Fourth, the "powers" are potentially but not necessarily "demonic." They become demonic when they grasp for, or are given, ultimate power and authority. This line of demarcation is an absolute one. If they become demonic, the "powers" are to be resisted and, perhaps, replaced by a more humane form of that "power." They drift toward the demonic as they repudiate God's values and set up their own values. When justice and mercy become a mockery, the Righteousness of God turns into his Wrath and the "powers" are crushed by the Arm of the Lord. The distinction between "fallen" and "demonic" may appear to some as semantic and to others as an ideological defense of the status quo.

However, I feel that it is necessary in order to avoid an absolute divinization or demonization of the "powers."

I have analyzed five different American theological positions concerning Christ and the social structures; and, I have evaluated each in light of the four theological motifs. The position of Walter Rauschenbusch and his version of the Social Gospel is: Christ transforming the "powers." Rauschenbusch saw the work of Christ and his church as the transformation of the "powers." To "Christianize" the "powers" meant to bring them under Christ's law of love, or to humanize them. Love and justice were the norms of the "powers." They were to be converted just as individuals were to be converted.

The Christian Realism of Reinhold Niebuhr perceived Christ's relationship to the "power" dialectically: Christ transcendent and relevant to the "powers." To say only that Christ was relevant to the "powers" was a sentimental illusion in which the values of Christ were to be applied simply to society. This was the error of theological and political liberalism. To say only that Christ was transcendent to the "powers" was to separate the realm of Christ from the realm of the "powers" and resulted in moral cynicism. This was the error of Christian orthodoxy and political conservatism. Niebuhr wished to hold Christ's transcendence and relevance in dynamic tension. The relevance of Christ's values to the "powers" avoided moral cynicism. The transcendence of Christ's values avoided moral complacence or absolutism.

Niebuhr's position meant politically that we were to work step by step toward conforming the "powers" to the norm of Christ, but that each step of progress was judged by that norm. Because of the transcendence of Christ's norm, the "powers" could not be "Christianized" as Rauschenbusch believed. The purpose of justice was to curb the egoism of the "powers" through a balance of "power." Therefore, the "powers" could be contained but not transformed.

The conservative position of Eric Voegelin is: God of the "powers," Christ separated from the "powers." The transcendent realm of God grounds the order of history and the realm of the "powers." Voegelin's "civil theology" makes God a God of the "powers" as the Authority behind the authorities. Order, not love or justice, is the primary virtue of the "powers."

Christ, on the other hand, stands for the kingdom of God, the perfect transcendent realm which must be kept separate from, and never confused with, the civil realm of the "powers." If we try to apply Christ's perfect values to the imperfect civil realm we make the gnostic error of "immanentizing the eschaton."[1] "Last things" are to remain "last things," beyond history. The attempt to transform the character of history or of the "powers" is the gnostic heresy which threatens to undermine the order of society. The conservative political position is congenial to Voegelin's thought as it also combines a civil religion which divinizes order with a moral cynicism which carefully separates the kingdom of God and history, or the values of Christ from the political realm. Christ will not, in Voegelin's thought, transform the "powers" (contra Rauschenbusch). Christ is not relevant to, only transcendent to the "powers" (contra Niebuhr). Voegelin stands against the stream of American social Christianity in all its forms.

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[1] James Buckley is reported to have printed bumper stickers in his last senatorial campaign which read: "Don't Immanentize the Eschaton!"

Resistance Theology's position is: Christ against the "powers." The "powers" are dehumanizing, death-dealing, and demonic. Therefore, we must resist the "powers." Our task is to confront the "powers" by representing the pure values of the kingdom of God which judge the "powers." The eschatological battle with the "powers" consists of unmasking their pretensions. We expose their impotence and say no to their violence. Resistance takes the form of symbolic protest, refusing to co-operate with the "powers" and being willing to accept punishment by the "powers" while refusing the favors of the "powers." Resistance Theology denies Rauschenbusch's belief that the "powers" can be Christianized; such an idea is a liberal illusion. Against Niebuhr, they say that to enter into the political game of the balance of power through the wielding of power denies the values of Christ and plays into the hands of the "powers." Our task is not to try to change the "powers" through pragmatic political action; rather, it is to live the "useless" life of resistance against the powers, thereby being signs of the kingdom of God. Against Voegelin they exercise a hope that the "powers" can be changed and reflect Christ's values. But this hope is in God's power and not in man's programs or progress.

The Black Liberation Theology of James Cone portrays Christ conquering the "powers." The work of Christ and his church is to transform or humanize the "powers" which are unjust and racist. The path of transformation is not seen, as in Rauschenbusch, as the evolutionary victory of love over selfishness. Rather, it comes through the revolutionary usurpation of power. The demonic "power" must be replaced by a more just and humane power. Cone's critique of the "powers" would be similar to that of Rauschenbusch, Niebuhr and Resistance Theology. It would differ from these in the means employed in the transformation of the "powers." It would advocate, contra Rauschenbusch, the necessary use of power and, contra Resistance Theology, the use of violence commensurate with the ends. It would accuse Niebuhr of defending the status quo in his "realism": the way things are determines what can be done. Contra Voegelin, Cone would maintain that the kingdom of God is to be brought into history while Voegelin would accuse Cone of being a Gnostic trying to establish a new age within history.

Critique

In each of the chapters I have sought to analyze each point in light of the four stated theological motifs. How does a particular position illuminate the motifs? How does it differ from or contradict the motifs? I shall now engage the thought of each position with each motif.

Eschatology and Ethics

Rauschenbusch acknowledged the eschatological already/not yet tension. He guarded properly against an enthusiastic, completely realized eschatology, that is, the kingdom fully come on earth. However, because of his evolutionary perspective and organismic model of society, he perceived that the major part of the battle with the "powers" had been won. In his perspective, one advance was the building block to the next. For example, Christ's victory in Christianizing the family set the stage for the victory in education, and so on. He emphasized the "already"; the kingdom of God was being made more and more a historical reality. But the battle was a hard fought one, full of conflict; and, the "not yet" pointed Rauschenbusch to the future in hope.

Niebuhr rejected the liberal evolutionary progressive view of history as an illusion. The increase of good increased the possibility of evil. Niebuhr also recognized the already/not yet eschatological tension and represented it in his dialectical theology which viewed Christ as both transcendent and relevant to the "powers" and the kingdom of God as transcendent and relevant to history. The eschatological kingdom was ontologically, or organically, connected to history, and yet, it also stood beyond history judging history. Niebuhr did not envision the kingdom of God on earth as had Rauschenbusch, but saw history as filled with both indeterminant possibilities and enduring corruptions which would lead history on an ironic, if not tragic, path until the end of history.

When Niebuhr did let the dialectical tension of his theology collapse, it collapsed in favor of the transcendent or "not yet" dimension. When this happened Niebuhr became more conservative, or 'too consistently realistic,' to use Niebuhr's own terms. When this happened, the eschatological tension was resolved by making the kingdom so transcendent that there was not the "commingling" of the City of God and the City of Man which Niebuhr admired in Augustine; the two Cities, or two kingdoms, or two ages were separated.

Voegelin separates Christ and the "powers," or the kingdom of God and history. If Niebuhr departed from his own dialectic and erred occasionally in favor of the transcendence of the kingdom, Voegelin made this error into a programmatic ideal. The kingdom of God was not to be a historical reality. To be sure, there existed an eschatological tension between the perfect kingdom and imperfect history, but this tension was to be borne in the individual's soul. The tension was not to be resolved by trying to make history conform to the kingdom of God. History, contra Rauschenbusch, cannot be transformed. The character of the "powers" in history cannot be changed. The "truth of society" is an unalterable truth. All talk of progress, transformation or transfiguration is gnostic propaganda.

Resistance Theology emphasizes the eschatological battle with the "powers." It denounces the fallenness of the "powers" and reminds us of the "not yet" dimension of history. The transcendence of the kingdom is the critical leverage by which to pronounce the "NO" of God on the world.[2] The "already," or presence of, the kingdom manifests itself in persons, groups or actions which point as signs to the values of the kingdom, usually spoken of as love, peace, non-violence and justice.

Liberation Theology conceives of history as moving toward transformation through the power of God's future. The kingdom of God acts as the goal of history. History is not closed or circular. Its character is not set. We dream dreams of a new stage of history free from injustice and violence. The kingdom of God which gives us these visions opens history up to the new. At this point Cone is closest to Rauschenbusch. He would share the same stern critique of the "powers" as Resistance Theology. Niebuhr, while sharing Liberation Theology's goal of justice, would call its eschatology a liberal illusion about history; and Voegelin would call it a gnostic dream. Liberation Theology would counter Niebuhr and Voegelin calling their eschatologies ideologies of the status quo.

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[2] Resistance Theology admires Karl Barth's theology. They seem, however, to reflect the early Barth more than the later Barth. Barth said later in life that the emphasis of his writings had changed: "To say 'yes' came to seem more important than to say 'no' (though that is important too). Theologically, the message of God's grace came to seem more urgent than the message of God's law, wrath, accusation and judgment . . . ." How I Changed My Mind (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 25.

The means of the battle with the "powers" would vary greatly among the positions even though most would share a hope in the transformation or humanization of the "powers" (with varying degrees of reserve). Rauschenbusch advocated the use of the moral force of religion (moral suasion). Niebuhr advocated the necessary use of power to confront and check oppressive power. Voegelin would agree to the use of power only in the defense of the order of society. Resistance Theology eschews any and all uses of power and violence and advocates non-violent resistance. Cone commends the revolutionary use of violence and power commensurate with the proper ends.

Christ as Lord of the "Powers"

Rauschenbusch sought to establish Christ as Lord of the "powers" by Christianizing them. Niebuhr recognized Christ's Lordship through the relevance of Christ's values to the "powers" and by the judgment Christ places on the "powers." He maintained that the "powers" could not completely deny Christ's values without destroying themselves. Voegelin divinizes the "powers" by grounding their authority and order in the transcendent; however, to apply the values of Christ to the powers is gnostic. Christ is not Lord of the "powers" in Voegelin's thought. In Resistance Theology, Christ is Lord of the "powers" as the present judge and future conqueror and destroyer of the "powers." For Cone, Christ is the Lord of the "powers" by setting up the norm by which they are judged and the goal toward which we seek to move the "powers."

Christ's Lordship prevents a divinization and a demonization of the "powers." He is both their norm and their judge. The Christological foundation prevents the "powers" from becoming autonomous from his values and his jurisdiction.

Fallenness and the "Powers"

All of our positions, except Voegelin's, agree that the powers are fallen. Resistance Theology and Cone's theology probably experience the brunt of their fallenness more than the rest, and their critique of the "powers" is more severe. Voegelin would agree that the "powers" are not perfect, but would add that they are still ordained for the purpose of representing the transcendent source of order. He would reject the "fall" as part of a gnostic scheme of creation/fall/redemption.

The "Powers" as Demonic

Rauschenbusch and Resistance Theology tend to equate sin and evil, or fallenness and the demonic, but in different ways. For Rauschenbusch, evil (demonic) is merely an intensification of sin (fallenness). For Resistance Theology the category of the demonic is so pervasive that it swallows up the distinction between sin and evil. Therefore, Rauschenbusch underestimates the radicality of evil and Resistance Theology seems mesmerized by the dark power of evil. The former tends toward a beneficent monism and the latter to a sinister (gnostic?) dualism. The "powers," therefore, appear too easily under the influence of Christ in the former and too inevitably under the influence of the demonic in the latter.

All five positions tend to call the "powers" demonic when they pretend to, or are given, ultimate power and authority. They would disagree on the definition of that line of demarcation. Voegelin, for example, would say that any attempt to transform a "power" according to the values of the kingdom is demonic. Cone, in contrast, would call a power demonic for refusing to represent the values of the kingdom. All would agree that a totalitarian or dictatorial "power" is demonic.

Christ and the "Powers": Retrospect and Prospect

The American theological context has been a rich one in which to analyze the problem of Christ and the "powers." The variations upon these positions are innumerable, and we await new configurations. The Social Gospel position has spawned many transformationist followers from Washington Gladden to George McGovern and Max Stackhouse. Reinhold Niebuhr has influenced a generation or two of Christian realists like John Bennett and Hubert Humphrey. Martin Luther King, Jr. was deeply indebted to both Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr. He combined the former's idealism and the realism of the latter[3] in a creative and profound way. President Jimmy Carter has mixed the pietism of his evangelical faith with the Christian Realism of Niebuhr. His auto-biography and speeches are filled with Niebuhrian statements. Andrew Young is a mixture of Niebuhr and King with a liberation theology influence. Henry Kissinger is a consistent realist closer to Voegelin than to Niebuhr.

There does not seem to be a new position being formed at the present. Liberation Theology is generating the most energy as women and non-whites are entering the theological mainstream up to now dominated by white males. Undoubtedly, Liberation Theology's global perspective and emphasis on the issue of oppression is of crucial importance. The "powers" are no longer local or even national realities; they are becoming global in power and influence.

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[3] See the excellent intellectual biography of King by Kenneth L. Smith and Ira G. Zepp, Jr., Search for the Beloved Community (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974).

Evangelical theology has recently become more socially and politically involved. The election of Jimmy Carter is making evangelical social ethics more visible. As evangelicals enter the discussion, they bring enthusiasm and fresh insights. At the present time they do not represent one cohesive position, but rather, find expression through the various positions studied in this dissertation. They may be divided into three groups: 1) conservative evangelicals; 2) moderate evangelicals; and 3) radical evangelicals.

Some conservative evangelicals represent the radical right (Carl MacIntire); others join the main-stream right. The latter would include former Representative John Conlan (Republican--Arizona) and Bill Bright who joined to promote a conservative Christian party.[4] Other evangelicals still remain in the fundamentalist position which seeks to separate religion and politics and thereby functions conservatively.[5]

Moderate evangelicals compose a wide range of representatives from the more conservative Carl F. H. Henry and Billy Graham to the more liberal representatives like Richard Mouw and Mark Hatfield.[6] All of these believe that the values of the gospel are relevant to the political structures. They would differ on strategy, Billy Graham, for example, still believing that social structures change as individuals are converted and Hatfield working as a United States Senator to try to change the structures themselves.

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[4] Newsweek (September 6, 1976), p. 63. See the critique of the "unholy alliance" between evangelicals and conservative politics by Richard V. Pierard, The Unequal Yoke: Evangelical Christianity and Political Conservatism (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970).

[5] See the Union Seminary Quarterly Review on "The Evangelicals" 32 (Winter, 1977), especially Donald W. Dayton, "The Social and Political Conservatism of Modern American Evangelicalism: A Preliminary Search for the Reasons," pp. 71-80.

[6] Richard J. Mouw's Politics and the Biblical Drama (Grand

Radical evangelicals are most closely alligned with Resistance Theology. Jim Wallis and the Sojourners community represent most visibly the radical evangelicals today.[7] Wallis edits the journal Sojourners (formerly the Post-American) which has become a forum for radical Christian political perspectives. William Stringfellow, for example, is a regular contributor. Other evangelicals are carrying on a dialogue with Liberation Theology.[8] We await with anticipation what evangelicals will have to offer further to the continuing discussion on Christ and the "powers."

Future solutions to the problem of Christ and the "powers" will be indebted to those who have struggled with the problem. We have

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Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1976) deals explicitly with the Christ and the "powers" theme. See also his Political Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1974); Mark Hatfield, Conflict and Conscience (Waco: Word Books, 1971); Carl F. H. Henry, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964); Paul B. Henry, Politics for Evangelicals (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974); I am also indebted to James G. Munro and his unpublished seminar paper, "The Political Ethics of Evangelicalism" for an excellent introduction to evangelical political theology. For general introduction also see David F. Wells, John D. Woodbridge, eds., The Evangelicals (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), esp. chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13; Sherwood Wirt, The Social Conscience of the Evangelical (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

[7] Jim Wallis, Agenda for Biblical People (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).

[8] Carl E. Armerding, ed., Evangelicals and Liberation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977).

learned from the idealism of Rauschenbusch and his vision of the kingdom of God on earth. Niebuhr teaches us that we can be realistic about the use of power and the stubbornness of sin without succumbing to moral cynicism. Voegelin reminds us of the danger of the "total critique" and of the imposition of an abstract scheme upon history. Resistance Theology keeps us from moral complacence and offers us the alternative of a heroic ethic of witness. Liberation Theology keeps us from accepting present injustice as the norm and forces us to see the global dimensions of justice and injustice. Its eschatological perspective keeps our vision open to the kingdom of God which is to come instead of closed by the way things are. They each offer dimensions to the ethic which corresponds to the eschatological battle between Christ and the "powers."

The Battle with the "Powers": An Eschatological Ethic

The "powers" represent a myriad number of social structures and realities. The Christian life is the struggle to reject the lordship of the "powers" who are not gods and to confess in word and deed Jesus Christ as Lord. The battle with the "powers" was not ended at the cross and resurrection; indeed, it shall continue until Christ has conquered all of the "powers." Christ's church is now engaged in the eschatological battle with the "powers." The nature of our battle with the "powers" differs according to the type of "power." We are called to separate ourselves from some "powers," to work within yet be inwardly detached from others, and to battle with other "powers." A greater precision is needed if we are to be able to appropriate the "powers" concept in Christian life. Obviously we cannot engage in the destruction of all the "powers" any more than we can näively follow all of them.

The first mark of our battle with the "powers" could be called the desacralizing of the "powers." This in effect was what early Christian confessions and liturgy did. Only Christ Jesus was Lord, not fate, Dionysus or the emperor. As followers of Christ we place a question mark against even the most necessary of the "powers"; for, persons are always seeking to deify the power most available to give them order and security. The "powers" deceive us into thinking they can answer all our needs and so threaten us with demonic enslavement. As necessary as the State is, for example, Christians must always place over it the apocalyptic reserve, the "not yet," that refuses to identify the State with the kingdom of God. The Christian question mark humanizes the State by demonstrating its limits. We do not rush with religious abandon into the American four year cycle of messianism as if the new President will bring the kingdom of God in on the wings of the ballot box.

The struggle against the "powers" is the relativizing of all "powers" in the world, while also taking seriously the relative. Just because the Presidency is de-sacralized does not mean that our attitude toward it should be indifference, as if not deserving of our effort and serious thought. Eschatological dualism means that history is important but not ultimate. As we relativize the "powers" of our day, we desacralize the institutions, demystify laws and traditions, and demythologize the great ideologies and causes.

A caution is necessary here. We exorcise these demonries by invoking the presence of the true divine presence known in Jesus Christ. The demonic breaks down only before the divine. We cannot defeat the false absolutes of the world by answering with our own absolutes. We can easily turn into a holy demonry in order to defeat a pagan demonry. Karl Barth perceived this phenomenon after the Second World War as "anti-communism" reached fanatic, even demonic, proportions. Anti-communism had become a new creed or religion.[9]

A second mark of our battle concerns the institutional and structural powers which are necessary to order human life. These are what certain theologians call "orders of creation" or "orders of preservation." Within history these are always necessary. However, eschatological realism knows these "powers" as fallen. Therefore, our battle with them does not consist in destroying them, but in seeking to "Christianize" them. Admittedly this statement is a dangerous one to make after Niebuhr's devastating critique of liberalism's näive and sentimental attempts to Christianize the "powers." However, when Christ is proclaimed Lord of the "powers," this means that what Jesus Christ represents, the "powers" should seek to represent. A moral cynicism about the State is impossible if Christ is Lord of the State. To proclaim Christ is Lord means that the ideal and goal of the State goes beyond the more limited goal as an order of creation and preservation. The State does more then than preserve order and maintain the dyke against chaos. It works as Christ's servant to make human life human. To Christianize the "powers" is to humanize them, to lead them to serve the needs of humankind.

When an institutional power becomes "demonic" it is the

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[9] Karl Barth, How I Changed My Mind (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 63; and Against the Stream: Shorter Post-War Writings, 1946-1952 (London: SCM Press, 1954), pp. 106-113, and 139.

Christian's battle instruction to resist it and to seek to replace it with a non-demonic form of the "power." When the law and order of a power become so oppressive that human life is impossible, it has denied its vocation under God. Both the wrath of God and the resistance of its citizens or subjects is the consequence. Karl Barth, commenting on Romans 13 in his famous Römerbrief, declares this fact pointedly, in the rich translation of Paul Lehmann:

> The law-and-order people (Ordnungsmaenner), who would like to strengthen their established position through existing institutional arrangements, are reminded that revolution is 'instituted' as the evil that is to direct them toward that which is good, so that without romanticism or self-justification, they might turn about and be law-and-order people no longer.[10]

The question, "How do we resist or battle these powers?", now comes into sharp focus. What weapons are Christian weapons as we battle the "powers"?

Ephesians 6:10-18 informs our third and final question concerning the nature of the battle: the weapons of the battle are the weapons of the Christian faith. The "Truth of God" disarms the "powers" by knocking from their hands their chief weapons--deceit and illusion. It strips them of their pretension to God's throne and exposes them as "weak and beggarly," as the beings that by nature are no gods. "The Righteousness of God" makes love and justice the "pure means" that we employ in the battle. Impure "means" never serve the "end" of the kingdom. We do not "ape" the enemy in order to defeat him; Paul warns us about returning evil for evil (Rom. 12:14ff.). How easily and with clear conscience America could fire-bomb Dresden, atom-bomb Hiroshima and blanket-bomb North Vietnam. The "gospel of peace" is a humanizing presence in the midst of demonic nationalisms and competing egoisms. "Faith" sees the world under the power of God and so fights purely, confidently, hopefully. "Salvation," that final consummating victory which we now enjoy as a foretaste, keeps our eyes on the Lord for salvation, in order that we turn not to human devices that promise instant salvation. "Hope" delivers us from premature despair, keeping our eyes on God's future rather than our seemingly hopeless present.

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[10] In Lehmann's The Transfiguration of Politics (New York: Harper and Row, Pub., 1975), p. 45; from Römerbrief, 1929 ed., p. 469; or in English, The Epistle to the Romans (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 485.

The "sword" is the "Word of God" which reveals the true nature, identity, and stature of the "powers." In this act not only are we saved from their control, but also, the "powers" are saved to perform their limited and true function! Ideologies are stripped of their deceptive masquerade as ultimate truth. Death, the past, and the future, are robbed of their psychological hold over humankind. Race, class, and nation lose their power to separate. Biological drives like sex and self-preservation are conformed to God's purpose as God's justifying grace curbs their compulsion.

The titles, positions, offices and roles lose their power to control life. We conquer them as we discover that they are not gods and that sometimes we must "obey God rather than man."

God's word reveals false determinisms as human patterns imposed on God's world. The Christ-event dethrones fate, demonstrating God's purpose in an open-ended history. Despair, along with its twin brother arrogance, is shown as human presumption.

The forgiveness of sins demonstrated on the cross frees us from all legalisms. The power of the law is the deadening grip of guilt;

the power of social tradition lies in the deadening grip of shame. God's power of forgiveness defuses the power of guilt and shame. No human tradition, social taboo, religious law or cultic regulation has ultimate power over us any longer. They are shown to be impotent. We are set free by Christ to live freely within tradition and laws though not bound up by them.

As our exegesis pointed out, the weapons in the Ephesians text are defensive weapons. Christ takes the offensive; we ward off the power of the "powers" until Christ defeats them. The defensive weapons of the battle correspond to the "subjective" victory of Christ over the "powers." Christ "in us" and we "in Christ" win the victory by preventing the internalizing control of the "powers." A philosophy, or allegiance, or ideology will not take hold of us and determine how we think and live.

The aggressive, more "objective" battle between Christ and the "powers" is equally important. The "Christianizing" of the "powers" is Christ's objective work accomplished in history through persons in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ's victory is not just stoic internal victory from outside forces; it is an historical victory won over the structural elements of a sinful society. Christ is not only Lord of an individual's soul, or of one's self-understanding, but is also the Lord of the cosmos and history.

The eschatological ethic sometimes coincides with the actions of the non-Christian who is working for the humanization of life. The Lord uses more than confessing Christians in his army. For example, part of the battle plan waged by Christ against the "powers" may be to limit the strength of competing "powers" through a political balancing of the "powers." To this end God may use the natural instincts of man as a political creature to prevent one "power" from dominating the others.

But at other times the Christian posture looks much different, for sometimes our eschatological ethic is one of watching and waiting. Sometimes to do nothing is the way to combat certain "powers." Our faith frees us from the compulsive, frenetic activism of the world at the same time it places us in the world, in history, to act for God. We do not rush head-long into every new cause or campaign. In our pragmaticized world this seems like foolishness indeed. To watch, to pray, to wait, and even to preach seem in the eyes of the activistic world most ineffective. The power of pragmatism controls our world by absolutizing the question, "Will it work?"

In a meditation on "inutility," Jaeques Ellul observes:

> To be controlled by utility and the pursuit of efficacy is to be subject to the strictest determination of the actual world . . . . To do a gratuitous, ineffective, and useless act is the first sign of our freedom and perhaps the last.[11]

Yes, to watch and pray, to preach and wait and hope, these are sometimes signs of the presence of the kingdom of God and of our battle with the "powers." As we so live we let God's future become present and truly open up the world.

Christ employs varied tactics in his battle. Some of his soldiers engage in hand to hand combat, some lead resistance groups, some contest propaganda, and some dress bandages. The battle is difficult; some of his soldiers fight with mixed motives; and the enemy is formidable. But Christ will be victorious; and that day will come when all his enemies are put under his feet and war will be no more.

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[11] Jacques Ellul, The Politics of God and the Politics of Man (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 197-198.

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APPENDIX

"An Antiphonal Litany" presenting the two views of the State: as intended by God (Romans 13) and having become demonic (Revelation 13). By H. Stephen Shoemaker, reprinted from Christianity and Crisis, 33(June 11, 1973), p. 109.

An Antiphonal Litany

From Romans 13 and Revelation 13

This arrangement of passages from Romans 13 and Revelation 13 was prepared by Stephen Shoemaker, a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York, as an antiphonal litany for use in a worship service in the Seminary's James Chapel, at which William Stringfellow was the preacher. We believe it should have wide usage and print it here to that end.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.
For there is no authority except from God,
and those that exist have been instituted by God.

Then I saw a beast emerge from the sea:
it had seven heads and ten horns,
with a coronet on each of its ten horns,
and its heads were marked with blasphemous titles.

Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

I saw that the beast was like a leopard,
with paws like a bear and a mouth like a lion;
the dragon had handed over to it his own power
and his throne and his worldwide authority.

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.
Would you have no fear of him who is in authority?
Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval.

And, the whole world had marvelled and followed the beast.
They prostrated themselves in front of the dragon, and in front of the beast saying, "Who can compare with the beast?
How could anybody defeat him?"

For he is God's servant for your good.
But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.

For forty-two months the beast was allowed to do whatever it wanted; and it mouthed its blasphemies against God's name and his heavenly Tent and all those who are sheltered there.

Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience.

The beast was allowed to make war against the saints and conquer them, and it was given power over every race and people, language and nation;

For the same reason you also pay taxes,
for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

And all the people of the world will worship it,
that is, everybody whose name has not been written down since the foundation of the world in the Lamb's book of life.

Pay all of them their dues,
taxes to whom taxes are due,
respect to whom respect is due,
honor to whom honor is due.

If anyone has an ear let him hear:
If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes;
If anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.
Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

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ABSTRACT

CHRIST AND THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN REPRESENTATIVE TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN THEOLOGIANS

Harold Stephen Shoemaker, Ph.D
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1978
Chairman: David L. Mueller

The problem of this dissertation is the relationship between Christ and the principalities and powers. The problem is illuminated by offering a conversation between New Testament texts dealing with the "powers" and representative twentieth-century American theologians who have dealt with the stated problem.

The first chapter examines various New Testament texts and interprets the "powers" as social structures and realities which may exert external or internal control over persons. With the use of a functional hermeneutic, five groups of "powers" are identified: 1) social structures and institutions; 2) ideologies and philosophies; 3) natural, biological and historical determinants; 4) official titles, roles and offices; and 5) false determinisms and religious and cultural legalisms. Four theological motifs are derived and developed from the New Testament texts: 1) Christ has inaugurated an eschatological battle with the "powers" which has "already" and "not yet" dimensions; 2) Christ is Lord of the "powers"; 3) the "powers" are fallen; and 4) the "powers" are potentially but not necessarily demonic.

The next five chapters analyze five representative American positions relating Christ and the "powers." Chapter Two presents the

position of Walter Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel: Christ transforming the "powers." The work of Christ and his church is the transformation or Christianization of the "powers": bringing them under Christ's law of love, thereby humanizing them. The eschatological victory over the "powers" would be won progressively.

Chapter Three concerns the Christian Realism of Reinhold Niebuhr: Christ transcendent and relevant to the "powers." His dialectical theology holds in dynamic tension the transcendence and relevance of Christ's agape. The kingdom of God is accordingly both transcendent from and organically related to history. The "powers" cannot be "Christianized" to live by Christ's law of love and must be checked by a balance of power. We should work step by step toward making the "powers" conform more to love and justice but each step is judged by Christ's norm of agape, the "impossible possibility."

Chapter Four presents the theological presuppositions of conservative political thought and of one of its leading scholars, Eric Voegelin, whose position is: God of the "powers"; Christ separated from the "powers." The historical realm of order, or of the "powers," is grounded in the transcendent realm of order. Thus Voegelin calls for a "civil theology" which makes God a God of the "powers" whose highest good is order. Christ stands for the values of the perfect kingdom of God which must be kept separate from history. Any attempt to transform the "powers" or to change the character of history is gnostic, the "immanentizing of the eschaton."

Chapter Five studies the Resistance Theology of Jacques Ellul, William Stringfellow and Daniel Berrigan whose position is: Christ against the "powers." The "powers" are demonically fallen. The

Christian's task is to resist them and to confront them by representing the true values of the kingdom of God which judge the "powers." In the eschatological battle with the "powers," we unmask their pretensions, expose their impotence and say no to their violence. Resistance Theology offers an ethic of witness to the presence of the kingdom.

Chapter Six presents the Black Liberation Theology of James Cone whose position is Christ conquering the "powers." The context for this position is the community of the oppressed. The work of Christ and his people is to transform the unjust and racist "powers" through the revolutionary usurpation of power. Liberation Theology envisions the new age in history free from oppression and works to see it realized through the power of "God of the Oppressed" and of Jesus Christ, the "Oppressed One."

Chapter Seven summarizes the exposition of each position and the critique of each position in light of the four theological motifs developed in Chapter One. It looks retrospectively and prospectively at the continuing conversation concerning Christ and the "powers," and it concludes with a statement regarding an eschatological ethic for the battle with the "powers."

VITA

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